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Official UK

PlayStation Magazine

No.

21

REVIEWED:

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RAGE RACER
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SYNDICATE WARS
OVERBLOOD
DESCENT II
AREA 51
REBEL ASSAULT 2
WING COMMANDER IV
RALLY CROSS
DARKLIGHT CONFLICT
GRID RUN

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Reviewed

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& Rally Cross. Plus 10 pages on
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Start up

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S CD?



Racer is
the most
t-after demo
ever run on
magazine. So
waste time
g this - load
and start
g. Then try
Speedster, and
Armstrong.

EXCLUSIVE DEMOS

AGENT ARMSTRONG
PLAYABLE: Take on bad underground in this great platform shoot

RAGE RACER
PLAYABLE: The second sequel to Ridge Racer. It's well worth the wait

SPEEDSTER
PLAYABLE: Psygnosis latest racing game is a speedy little thing

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE
PLAYABLE: The cutesy 3D adventure which is largin' it small-time

Disc 04: Vol 2



Agent Armstrong **Playable**
 A 3D platform adventure is a
 gangster's paradise. Prepare
 a massacre.

Rage Racer **Playable**
 The latest, and arguably
 fastest, racing game. Your
 chance to lap it up.



Speedster **Playable**
 Psygnosis take to the road again.
 See how this compares with F1
 and Wipeout 2097.

Little Big Adventures **Playable**
 Delphine's quirky isometric
 adventure was massive on the
 PC. Now for the PlayStation.



Would you believe it? We slave well into the night, checking the spelling of words like 'somniaambulism' and 'crepuscular', spend hours deliberating between a six and a seven for *Little Big Adventure*, and work through our lunchtimes simply to come up with the perfect headline. Nobody says a word. Stick the CD in a little plastic box, though, and suddenly we're creative editorial geniuses. Hey, but who are we to argue? Glad you were pleased with the decision - wish we'd done it months ago.

This month we have a playable *Rage Racer* demo encased in that clear plastic packaging. And should you feel it necessary to read the free 140-page magazine attached, we also continue the racing theme with reviews of *Rage Racer*, *V-Rally* and *Rally Cross*, and have a 10-page feature on the history of the racing game. Enjoy.

Me? I'm off to check the spelling of 'bitter', 'twisted' and 'Editor'.

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)

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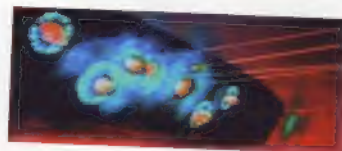
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The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. ASM: the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



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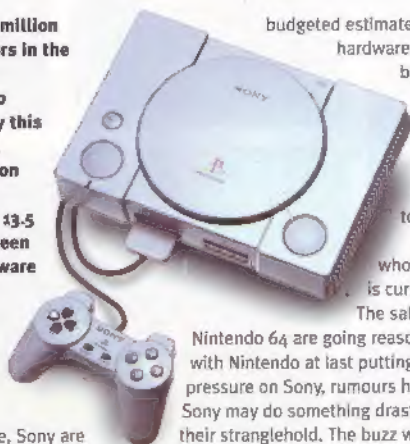
Update

PlayStation hits 1,000,000 mark

And further price-cuts are rumoured

There are now one million PlayStation owners in the UK. That was the incredible news to emerge from Sony this month, with the additional information that three million units have been shipped to Europe since its launch and 13.5 million PlayStations have been sold around the globe. Software sales are put at 100 million units and in total the PlayStation has contributed over three billion dollars to Sony's overall sales.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Sony are struggling to meet consumer demands, with these figures far outstripping the



budgeted estimates. Production hardware capacity has been increased

dramatically to cope with the continued demand and expansion is set to continue.

Indeed, the whole games market is currently booming. The sales of the

Nintendo 64 are going reasonably well, and with Nintendo at last putting some sort of pressure on Sony, rumours have surfaced that Sony may do something drastic to maintain their stranglehold. The buzz within the industry is that Sony may use the E3 show, in Atlanta, to announce a further price reduction,

putting the PlayStation at \$99 and £99 in America and the UK respectively. Retailers are very much against the move, claiming that the market has recently gained stability and has reached a happy equilibrium. Sony have always been keen to set their own agenda, however, and will not bow to external pressures. No information has been forthcoming from Sony, as yet, and we wait with interest for developments in Atlanta.

Finally, there was also some stunning late news in that Sony are to sponsor the UEFA Champions League from September of this year, for the next three seasons. The £10-million deal will include much merchandising as well as advertising. More details next month.



More Platinum

Range titles are on the way! Electronic Arts are to release two of their best-selling sports titles, *FIFA* and *PGA*, at the reduced price of £19.99. They will be joined by *Fade To Black* and *Need For Speed*, both excellent titles that recorded scores of 8/10 and received StarPlayer awards in PSMB and PSMS respectively.

The four will add another dimension to the games available at the £20 price. There are now 10 titles available, covering all of the major genres. This is great news for PlayStation owners, especially for new adopters, who will be able to bulk out their games collections very quickly. *Rayman*, from Ubisoft, is the latest game rumoured to be joining the Platinum range, thus offering gamers a platform title at the cheap end of the scale.

But it's bad news for the Saturn

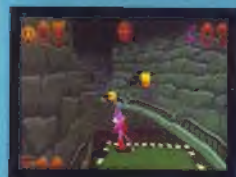


One console not benefiting from the current console boom is, predictably, the Saturn. Recent *ChartTrack* figures showed the Saturn contributing to only 3% of market share at present. On top of that has come the announcement that *Tomb Raider 2* will not be released for the machine. Lara Croft will be appearing on the PlayStation, followed by the PC, but plans for her to make a show on the Saturn have now been scrapped.



It is assumed that poor sales of the original was the reason for not continuing with the sequel.



PRIMAL SCREEN
IN BRIEF**Name:** *Jersey Devil***Style:** Platform**Publisher:** Behaviour Interactive**Developer:** Mega Toons**Release:** Winter '97

In a nutshell: Based on an obscure American, made famous by an early *X-Files* episode. You play said devil working your way through 11 arduous levels of menace-filled mayhem in your attempt to fight off the evil Dr Knarf. Your character is equipped with a wide variety of modes including tail whipping, climbing and gliding.

First Impressions: This should be worth having a look at, Behaviour Interactive have worked hard to make this something more than just another platform games. For example, instead of just having one type of trap, *Jersey Devil* has loads throughout the game. Available later in the year, *Jersey Devil* looks like it has a good chance of becoming a hit.

**Name:** *Nuclear Strike***Style:** Shoot 'em up**Publisher:** Electronic Arts**Developer:** In-house**Release:** Christmas '97

In a nutshell: Like *Soviet Strike* with bigger explosions. Following on quickly from *Soviet*, *Nuclear* sees you acting as a pseudo peace keeper, travelling the world destroying the apparatus of nuclear weapons following a worldwide peace treaty. *Nuclear Strike* will be more a mission based game with you being sent all over the world disarming states by any means necessary.

First Impressions: There are those people who think seen one *Strike* game, seen 'em all. But we reckon they're missing the point, with each version better than the last. Details are scant at the minute but watch for a ProPlay in the next issue of PSM.

Primal Screen

The section in which we unveil the games that are new to you. Take a first look at some of the titles coming soon...

Tomb Raider 2

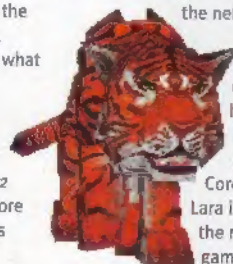
The Croft Original is revisited

**Style:** Arcade**Publisher:** Eidos Interactive**Developer:** Core Design**Release:** Christmas '97

In a nutshell: Well it's *Tomb Raider*, isn't it? The games phenomenon of the '90s. For anyone new to the PlayStation, here's a quick summary of *Tomb Raider*. You play Lara Croft, an *Indiana Jones*-type character, who

travels the world uncovering hidden treasures from lost civilisations for rich collectors.

First Impressions: From what we've seen, so far, the graphics are a vast improvement from what were wonderful graphics anyway. Just take a look at this fantastic tiger. *Tomb Raider 2* will feature a lot more levels outside. Fans of Lara will be



delighted to hear about her latest attire, as she slips into a wetsuit to search a sunken ocean liner while relying on air pockets for oxygen. Another level sees Lara searching the nether areas of Venice. The sequel will be more action-based than the original with a lot more human interaction than before. Details are slowly seeping out of Core, next month will have a Lara information on the most awaited game of the year.



Deathtrap Dungeon

Dungeons and Dragons part 2

Style: Arcade adventure

Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Developer: In-house

Release: Autumn '97

In a nutshell: Based on the 15 million-selling RPG novels written by Ian Livingstone (now Eidos head-honcho). The player is dropped in the middle of a fully 3D fantasy world and given some fiendish puzzles to work their way through 20 levels and sub-levels. The game caters for both sexes, with a male and female lead character among the 55 animated creatures on show. Eidos have assembled a collection of RPG experts, including Jamie Thompson, former editor of *White Dwarf* and master puzzle maker, to ensure the game has an authentic *Dungeons and Dragons* feel.



First Impressions: It's certainly interesting. We played a very early version of *DD* recently. It was very rough but the basic quality of the gameplay was obvious. The



graphics, although promising, look rough at the moment. Some of the creatures on show were mighty impressive, one of the best examples of this was the dragon.

When this first appears in the game, it takes up the whole screen, not a good sign when you have to work out how to defeat it.



Croc: The Legend of the Gobbos

In a while... Crocodile

Style: 3D platformer

Publisher: Fox Interactive

Developer: Argonaut Software

Release: September

In a nutshell: The closest thing PlayStation owners will get to a version of *Mario 64*. Croc and the Gobbos lived in harmony until a jealous Baron Dante casts a spell on the King turning all the Islanders against him. It is up to Croc to break the spell and save his King.



First Impressions: The graphics are very smart indeed and the Croc character is great without being too cheesy. The game is by far the most true of the pseudo 3D games we've seen so far.



Batman and Robin

The saga continues

Style: Third-person shoot 'em up

Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: In-house

Release: Winter '97

In a nutshell: A film version of the fourth *Batman* film. Instead of the normal 2D side-scrolling affairs, the fourth game has been thrust firmly into the third dimension. Using a 3D model based on the film blueprints, players will be able to explore Gotham City at their leisure, fighting crime.



First Impressions: After the mess that were the previous *Batman* titles Acclaim will be working hard to ensure they don't make the same mistake twice. We'll be paying attention.



The whole industry this month is preoccupied with one event: E3. This may not sound like anything to you but for the lucky few who get sent over there, it means a torrid time of meetings, parties and more meetings. Companies from all over the world will be sending their best games to Atlanta to make sure they get the most publicity possible in the shortest time.

Back in the office, it's been fairly quiet because of E3. It seems most companies are holding on to their games for the 'special unveiling' at Atlanta. You'll be pleased to hear we've already got loads of exclusive PrePlays organised for next month irrespective of what happens.

Anyway, enough of the high life and back to the real stuff. We've recently heard some bad news about *Resident Evil 2*. Apparently Capcom are having problems with it and it looks like it's slipped again. Its new date is the end of 1997 in Japan - meaning we might not get to see an English version until 1998.

On a happier note, we have just received verbal confirmation that *Final Fantasy VII* will be making its way over the Atlantic to the UK. Scheduled for an early September release in the States it's only a matter of time before we get it here now the English translation is out of the way. As a way of promotion, SquareSoft announced they would be giving away 1,000,000 demo discs of the game in the States. You never know, we might even get hold of it for our disc.

That's enough for this month, watch out for our E3 report for all the latest news.

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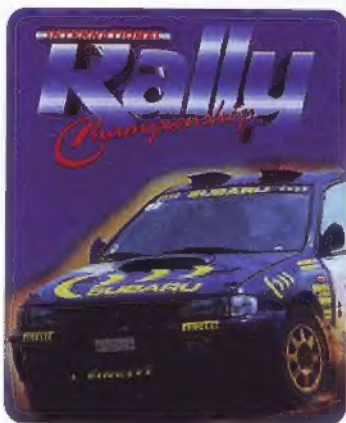
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The land of hope and glory

Oh to be in England when... it's fairly sunny and there are plenty of decent games knocking about. At least we think that's how the poem goes...

Macclesfield: Known in the past more for their magazines, Europress are steadily breaking into the world of videogame publishing, and autumn will see the release of their first PlayStation title, *International Rally Championship*.

Their original rallying title, *RAC Rally Championship*, was a big hit in 1996 on the PC and this will be the sequel which is this time widening its net to take in PlayStation as well. The game boasts all the major cars and tracks that make up rallying, and attention to detail looks incredible, including headlight beams, animated spectators and skid marks. With split-screen and link-ups to be available, this could provide a real test for Ocean's *V-Rally*.



Sheffield: Gremlin have announced that the release of *Hardwar* has slipped somewhat, but details of their *Actua* sports range soften the blow. It now appears that *Actua Soccer 2* will be released in October this year and will include all 92 English clubs, recognisable players and 27 stadia.

Actua Tennis has slipped from June to September, but is shaping up nicely nevertheless. *Actua Ice Hockey*, meanwhile, is still on course for a November release in time for Christmas. Along with the release of *Premier Manager '97* in October, the autumn is shaping up to be a busy time for the Sheffield publishing company.



Derby: More information has emerged from Core Design regarding their 3D arcade-style fighting game due out on PlayStation in September. Described as a cross between *Tekken* and *Die Hard Trilogy*, it is a one- or two-player game in which any of four characters progress through some 25 stages, comprising some 10 levels.

You fight your way through offices, trains, flying airships and secret islands, making the most of some 50 or 60 character-specific fighting moves and a variety of vicious weapons, including parts of the scenery that you can snap off and use. Best of all, it allows unparalleled freedom of movement. Play it again and you'll take a different route, exploring areas not previously seen. We should see it all next month.



Surrey: Meanwhile, from Telstar emerges news of *Joe Blow* and *Formula Karts*, both due out in September. *Formula Karts* follows on from the successful *Super Karts* and *Manic Karts* games, and sees you racing a motorised sled at up to 70mph just inches off the ground. Featuring polygon tracks and karts, motion-sampled animated drivers, two-player split screen and link-up options, it sounds like fun.

As does *Joe Blow*, which promises 'totally non-linear 3D platforming'. All is not well in Dreamworld and so Joe sets out with his baseball cap, chewing gum and spray can to defeat the Emperor. Unique free-floating cameras and over 65,000 colours add to the experience. More on both shortly.



Brighton: Mindscape revealed three new titles to PSM at the Brighton Metropole this month: *Dark Omen*, *Supersonic Racers 2XS* and *Super Football Champ*. *Dark Omen* is the follow-up to *Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat* and is, again, from Games Workshop. Twenty people are currently working on the 'real-time, arcade strategy game' and they are implementing the intense feedback received from *Warhammer* fans, which will include improved AI, improved 3D graphics and a two-player mode.

Supersonic Racers 2XS is also a sequel – we'll let you guess what to. Faster, more colourful and with thumping rock choons, this is sure to give *MMV3* a run for its reason. *Super Football Champ*, meanwhile, comes from Talto – turn to page 52 for a full PrePlay.



Suspensions are rife among the men in charge, but once again PSM's Sony mole risks all to bring us the latest developments from across the pond

Our mole inside Sony has been creating all manner of havoc among senior figures at the company. Sony's marketing people are tearing the place up trying to find the disloyal insider (codenamed '#'). His latest despatches regard a title called *CART: Indy Car World*, which is already being described as a generation further than last year's *Fx*, with some seriously rapid frame rates and auto-driving detail.

Meantime, Sony's analog controller was recently released in Japan, and already numerous titles in development are reported to be compatible. These mainly fall into the action/adventure and fighting categories, but this trend could spread to just about any genre. The two analog sticks offer a wealth of unprecedented control for the PlayStation. Titles which have been confirmed as using the analog pad include *Crash 2*, *Spawn*, *Rally Cross*, *Tobal 2*, *Bushido Blade*, *Wild G's*, *Agent Gex*, *Fighting Force*, *Deathtrap Dungeon* and *Tomb Raider 2*.

Talking of *Tobal 2*, US newsgroups are burning with outrage following the revelation that the game won't be released in the States. The problem, according to Square in Hawaii, is that the bother

of translating the adventure aspect of the game is hardly worth the financial returns. Despite critical acclaim, the original didn't sell well in the US. Of course, no JS version translates into no JK version...

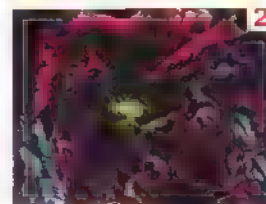
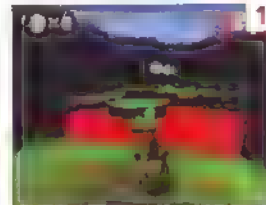
Details of Sony's forthcoming *Spawn* game, based upon the comic of the same name, are also leaking out. *Spawn* is an adventure/fighter where players control the comic-book superhero and battle through various time periods. In this first person shooter, *Spawn* must fight his way through prehistoric, medieval, and modern worlds in an effort to reach his soul's keeper. The game features a player-controlled camera and analog controller support. Be sure to expect lots of secret rooms and areas, weapon power-ups and even some platform elements.

However, many of you will be more excited by the prospect of *Cardinal Sin*. As in *Bushido Blade*, the battles are fought in large arenas, with freedom of movement for the characters. Each battle takes place in a giant building,

with fighting rings connected by spike-filled passageways and fire pits. And the environments become part of the action, as opponents can be skewered on a spike or tossed into a burning pit. Eight fighters can be selected, with battle axes, swords, and crossbows all part of the bloody battles. Along with the usual hand-to-hand combat, *CS* allows players to use magic in their conflicts. Both *Spawn* and *Cardinal Sin* are expected to appear in the JS late this year, so with luck, they'll be released in JK by Christmas.

Fox Interactive's platformer, *Croc*, is coming along a treat. At first glance it could easily be mistaken for an N64 title; with its bright colours and smooth textures, the game stands out from the standard PlayStation fare. By using sounds, environments and animations that are aimed toward a young audience, it looks set to break open a market that hasn't yet been fully realised on Sony's machine. Its eye-catching character boasts a huge supply of moves, while the enemies are whimsically animated. *Croc* employs 3D platform elements with a good variety of action: players can jump, swing, climb and swim their way through more than 40 levels.

Finally Sony have introduced a cheaper-to-make PlayStation into the market, which has sparked the usual speculation about retail prices. The machine currently sells for \$149. Many believe that \$99 by Christmas is an inevitability, as the hardware wars reach their zenith. The prospect of a quick drop to \$129 late in the summer is also worthy of note. The best news about the new PlayStation is that Sony have fixed all those skpping FMV and overheating problems which they never admitted existed in the first place. Er, bravo Sony.



[1] Fox Interactive's 3D cartoon style platformer, *Croc* (top) is aimed at the younger gaming market. With its bright colours and smooth graphics it could easily be mistaken for an N64 title. [2] In adventure/shoot 'em up *Spawn* you guide the comic-book superhero through various time periods. [3] *Tobal 2*. Unfortunately the original failed to do well in the States, and hence this sequel will never reach these shores...



Rally Cross (left) and *Fighting Force* (above) are two of the titles which are to use Sony's innovative analog controller.



x



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TESTEST



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MISSILE COMMAND



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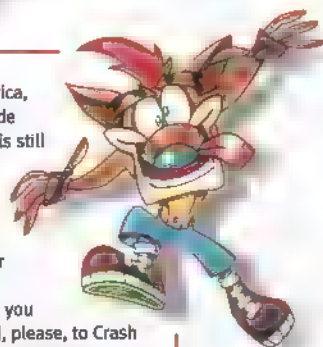
Dublin: It had to happen. Lara Croft has gone on tour. Even before her own singing career has taken off, U2 have invited her along on the biggest world tour of all time...

Bono and the lads commissioned Core Design to produce exclusive footage of Lara in action that will be played on the 7000 square-foot videoscreen (the largest in the world). The tour, which kicked off in Las Vegas on April 25, is costing £75 million and will last 14 months. To make sure the boys don't get bored, Eidos have provided PlayStations and copies of *Tomb Raider* to take with them. *PSM* will see the boys in action with Lara in Dublin this June.

America: With *Crash Bandicoot II* being developed in America, Universal Studio Consumer Products have announced plans for a world-wide merchandising programme. However, what they will actually merchandise is still

unclear. Obviously *Crash* and the other cartoon characters lend very well to any manner of ideas, including clothing, stationery and cuddly toys, but at the moment our guess is as good as yours.

So what *Crash* product would you like to buy? Answers on a postcard, please, to Crash Test, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



France: As Charon, the most lethal killer in the Cosmos, you are the eponymous *Perfect Assassin*. Except, just as you're called to your biggest mission ever, your memory is inexplicably erased. What follows is a science-fantasy adventure with a twisting plot that involves time travel and lots of armed contact.

The brainchild of Kev Walker, an artist who has drawn for *2000AD* and the *Sly Stone* movie, *Judge Dredd*, *Perfect Assassin* has over 100 locations, over a dozen alien species and 250 photo-realistic characters. Due out in September, a PrePlay should follow shortly.



The World of PlayStation

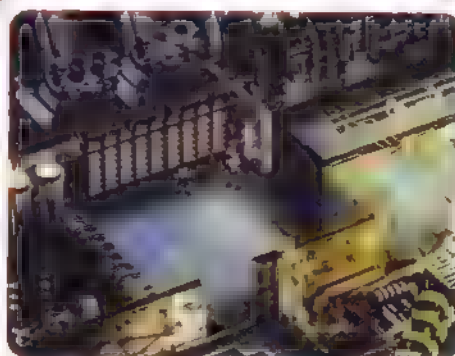
Oh baby, baby it's a wild world, and it's made all the wilder by the presence of Johnny Foreigner doing his bit for the PlayStation. *PSM* are leaving on a jet plane...

Bordeaux: French developers Kalisto Entertainment are developing a unique combat and adventure game called *Nightmare Creatures*. Imagine dropping a character from *Tekken* into *Tomb Raider* and you'll just about get the idea. The game is set in the dark and dingy streets of 19th century London and the story is based on a secret society called the Brotherhood of Hecate. The city is awash with monsters and you can take the role of a man or woman, named Ignatious and Shirley respectively. The action is viewed in the third-person perspective and the environment is in 3D. *Nightmare Creatures* could be one of the year's most exciting releases and we'll bring you the lowdown next month.



Paris: Disney is returning to the PlayStation after an absence of more than a year. The last title, *Mickey's Wild Adventure*, was more of a SNES conversion than a 'proper' PlayStation game, fun though it was. *Hercules* is set to change all that. Developed concurrently with the animated film feature of the same name, *Hercules* is the son of the mythical Greek god, Zeus, who must do battle against Pluto, the evil God of the underworld Hades. Pluto is planning a hostile takeover of Mount Olympus and only Hercules can save the world. You get the picture...

Disney are planning to release both game and film simultaneously, something *Hercules'* producer, Craig Allen, is excited about: 'Working with the theatrical group has been important to us', he explains. 'In addition to retaining the integrity of the art direction and storyline, it's had some real benefits. Different media offer different ways of interpreting concepts and storylines'. We'll look at *Hercules* in depth next month.

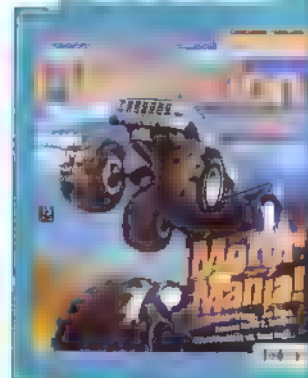


Japan: After much rumour and debate, Sony have confirmed that *Final Fantasy VII* will get an American and UK release this autumn. For various reasons, it was in debate as to whether the launch would take place. First of all the translation into English was thought to be a stumbling block, then there was controversy over certain sexual and violent scenes in the game. Lastly, there was simply discussion over whether the gameplay was appropriate for western gamers.

It appears all has been resolved now, however, and with the hype surrounding the game it seems strange that its release was ever debated. *Final Fantasy* mania should sweep the country this coming autumn.



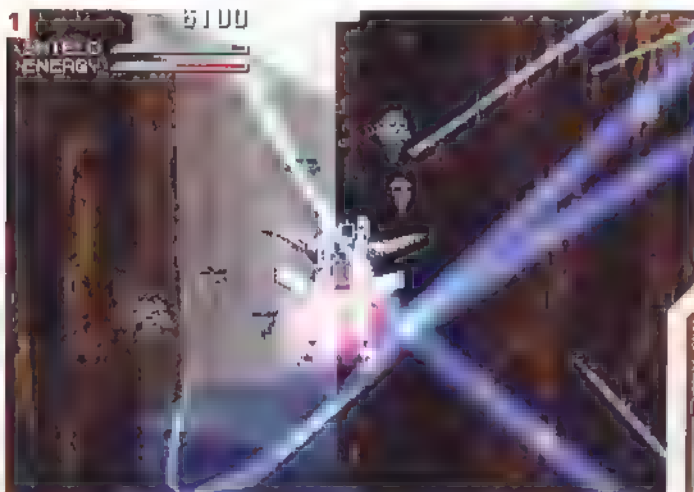
FOREIGN COVERAGE



JAPAN COLUMN

43 ON 141 21E

Our man in the Orient reports healthy PlayStation sales in Japan and divulges further findings from the recent Tokyo Game Show



(1) 3D shoot 'em up, EOS. (2) The famous 2D series Virtual Hiryunoken comes to PlayStation. (3) Takara's new sequel, Puzzle Arena Toshinden.

By mid February more than 5.6 million PlayStations had been sold in Japan, a total which far exceeded the five million figure Sony projected in 1995. But, of course, this impressive sales figure was only made possible to the detriment of other hardware: the N64 and the Sega Saturn were also touted to sell more than 5,000,000 units by the end of '96, but had only succeeded in selling 4,800,000 units by March '97. Meanwhile Sony's console grows from strength to strength: by the end of this year, approximately 8,100,000 units are planned to have been sold.

Returning to the recent Tokyo Game Show, the event was a huge disappointment. It was a prime opportunity for most developers to introduce their latest software, but currently there's a sad lack of any big titles...

The robot game is proving a favourite genre among gamers in Japan, perhaps as a direct result of the popular Gundam TV series. And not surprisingly, there's a stream of new titles hitting the market. Armed Core is a new robot fighting game about to be released

by From Software. It sets the player in various environments - city, desert, and so on - and involves you working through numerous and diverse missions, such as eliminating terrorists in an underground car park, or escorting trucks. Between missions the player can stock up on weapons and can collect boosters which allow you to fly. According to the developers, each mission will have to be played at least twice before it's completed.

Takara's robot title, *Votom Gaiden*, is based on *Votom*, an animation movie which takes its inspiration from *Gundam*. The game involves a series of duels which, like *Armed Core*, take place in assorted 3D environments - urban, desert, etc. However the fighting arenas are smaller and no preliminary strategy is required. Three modes are available - a championship mode, a story mode based on the animation movie, and a training mode. The developers have also included a customisation feature which allows you to build your own robot for each fight. *Votom Gaiden*'s game system and graphics are similar to the arcade game, *Virtual-On*, but its story mode remains typically Japanese.

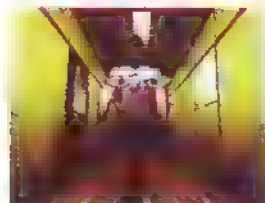
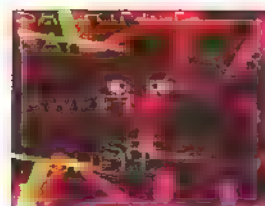
Microt have finally reappeared after a long absence with a sequel to *Ray Storm*, a new 3D shoot 'em up called EOS. Although the game resembles its predecessor, with its 3D view and fully texture-mapped backgrounds, its environment is more interesting. The game sees you in charge of Varna, a country located in another planet, and in order to protect Varna from warring factions you must pilot a fighting robot called EOS. You also have a laser beam and eight different missiles at your disposal. The number of polygons displayed on the screen is impressive, as are the light effects. EOS would look like a classical

European shoot 'em up, were it not for the inclusion of some magnificent animation movie sequences in between the shooting phases. The game boasts some gorgeous graphics, but we'll have to await its release to see if the gameplay can better *Ray Storm*.

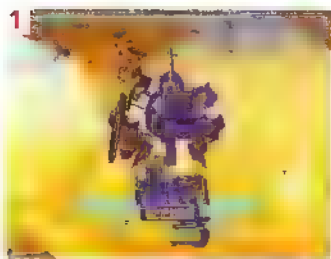
The famous 2D series, *Virtual Hiryunoken*, is finally making a 3D appearance on PlayStation. The game has been in development for two years and the result is nothing short of impressive. Graphics run at 60 fps, making character movement very smooth, and each character is rumoured to be made up of around 1000 polygons, which may explain the presence of flat *Tekken*-style backgrounds. The player can employ Aikido throwing techniques as well as being able to use a *Virtual Fighter* 3-type escape button, which allows you to avoid an attack by stepping aside. But the game's most impressive features are the gorgeous effects and combos that make *Tekken* look sadly faded by comparison. *Virtual Hiryunoken* is indeed a gorgeous-looking fighting game that offers decent gameplay.

The good news is that Takara are going to make a sequel to *Toshinden*. This time around the developers are including a puzzle element hence *Puzzle Arena Toshinden* - while retaining the characters of the original.

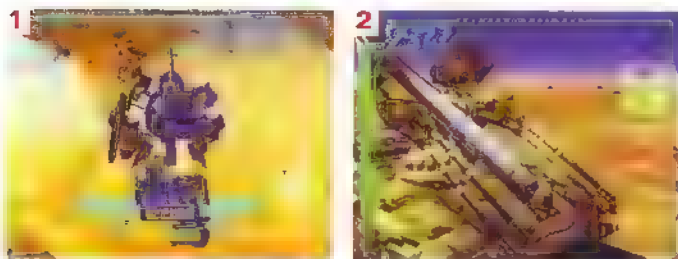
And finally LSD, from Asmik, surely has to be the oddest videogame of the year. It isn't an adventure game, but is being described as a 'walking dream simulator'. Players are placed in a psychedelic world in which they will face various events. Asmik have revealed little about the game system, but with such a provocative title it's likely that the game will be subject to censorship. Now that's a shame...



LSD, from Asmik. The developers claim that the game isn't about 'taking some acid and going to the next stage', and warn that 'acid is illegal... take it at your own risks'. Clearly they have.



(1) Takara's robot game, *Votom Gaiden*, takes its inspiration from the famous *Gundam* TV series. (2) Another robot/combat title, *Armed Core*.



WHO SAID LEAD WAS BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?




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PlayStation

& PC CD Rom

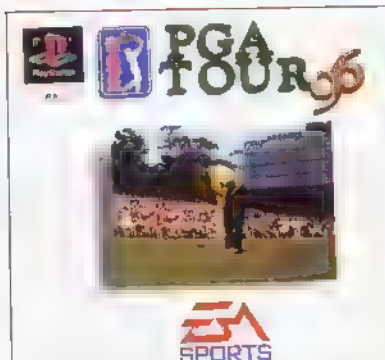
www.bullfrog.co.uk





More Platinum games

Cheap works of Art



Top 20

The Gallup top 20 of PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

(NE) *Soul Blade*

SCEE

(NE) *Rebel Assault 2*

Electronic Arts

(NE) *Bark Force*

Electronic Arts

(NE) *Need for Speed 2*

Electronic Arts

(5) *Formula 1*

Psygnosis

(3) *Tombs Raider*

Cidons Interactive

(4) *Demolition Derby*

Electronic Arts

(7) *Ridge Racer*

SCEE

(10) *Porsche Challenge*

SCEE

(5) *Tekken*

SCEE

(2) *Micro Machines V3*

Electronic Arts

(NE) *Jonah Lomu Rugby*

Electronic Arts

(13) *Die Hard Trilogy*

Fox Interactive

(12) *Crash Bandicoot*

SCEE

(16) *Worms*

Ocean/Tea

(RE) *Wipeout*

Electronic Arts

(RE) *Player Manager*

Electronic Arts

(18) *FIFA '97*

Electronic Arts

(15) *Command & Conquer*

Electronic Arts

(14) *Die Hard Trilogy*

Fox Interactive

(12) *Crash Bandicoot*

SCEE

(16) *Worms*

Ocean/Tea

(RE) *Wipeout*

Electronic Arts

(15) *Command & Conquer*

Electronic Arts

(14) *Die Hard Trilogy*

Fox Interactive

(12) *Crash Bandicoot*

SCEE

(16) *Worms*

Ocean/Tea

(RE) *Wipeout*

Electronic Arts

(15) *Command & Conquer*

Electronic Arts

(14) *Die Hard Trilogy*

Fox Interactive

In an interesting move for the industry, Sony have allowed a third party to get their hands on the Platinum logo and release their own titles under the banner.

From June 16 you will be able to get your hands on five of Electronic Arts' most popular games for £19.99. The games are *Road Rash*, *FIFA '96*, *Fade To Black*, *Need For Speed* and *PGA '96*.

Of the five, our personal favourite is *Fade To Black*. Reviewed in PSM8, the sequel to

Flashback proved to be one of the great sci-fi adventures on the PlayStation. And for £19.99, it's a bargain.

Discussing the releases, Electronic Arts' European product marketing director said, 'We've got five titles that qualify for Platinum status and we've decided to take advantage of the marketing and support that Sony are putting behind this sector'. He continued: 'We want to gain a market leading share of the PlayStation market and we believe this must be achieved while maintaining clear quality

standards in the budget sector'

Joining the EA games will be Ubisoft's *Rayman*. This incredibly hard platformer has sold more than 500,000 Europe-wide since its release in the dawn of the PlayStation era. All of the games will feature the familiar Platinum banding along with the publishers' own logos.

While many of the releases are something of a surprise, they nevertheless affirm Sony's commitment to affordable gaming. The only question now, is what they will be releasing next?



OUT THIS MONTH

THE LATEST PLAYSTATION RELEASES

June

Talk about a strange top 20. We got it right with *Soul Blade* — we thought it would be number one. But we didn't expect the two *Star Wars* games to do so well in the charts. It's amazing what a re-released film can do for dull software. Steve Sater, at Game, in Meadowhall, Sheffield, said that *Rebel Assault 2* had been their best seller this month, but that *Soul Blade* had sold very well — as had *Porsche Challenge*. June is considered one of the worst months for game releases, as most companies keep their best stuff till after the summer holidays. It's a testament to the power of the PlayStation that games such as *Rage Racer* and *ISS Pro* are scheduled for release slap bang in the middle of the 'so-called' slow season. It should certainly be an interesting summer.

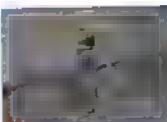
ON SALE NOW

Information provided by HMV, Bath

<i>Monster Trucks</i>	Psygnosis	PSM1	7/10
<i>Rayman</i>	Platinum	PSM1	7/10
<i>Fade To Black</i>	Platinum	PSM8	8/10
<i>Rage Racer</i>	SCEE	PSM21	9/10
<i>V-Rally</i>	Ocean	PSM21	9/10
<i>ISS Pro</i>	Konami	PSM20	9/10
<i>Independence Day</i>	Electronic Arts	PSM21	4/10
<i>FIFA '96</i>	Platinum	PSM2	7/10
<i>Road Rash</i>	Platinum	PSM3	6/10
<i>PGA Tour '96</i>	Platinum	PSM2	8/10

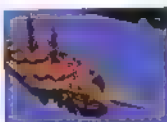
PlayStation
Magazine

RECOMMENDS



Fade To Black

When it was first reviewed in July '96, we gave this sci-fi arcade adventure eight out of ten and a StarPlayer. Kidnapped by the evil Morphs, you must escape their prison and help the resistance rid their world of the vile aliens. Re-released at 20 quid, *Fade To Black* is a bargain.



Vandal Hearts

If the idea of a turn-based strategy game bores you to death, turn the page now. If, however, you enjoyed the likes of *X-Com* then this could be just up your alley. You play the part of Ash, guiding warriors through battles as he travels through the mystical land of Astaria.



PGA '96

This was the first PlayStation version of the vintage golf series. Featuring two courses and a variety of nasty outfits, *PGA '96* received an impressive eight out of ten and a StarPlayer award in PSM2. For golf fans on a tight budget, *PGA '96* is just about perfect.



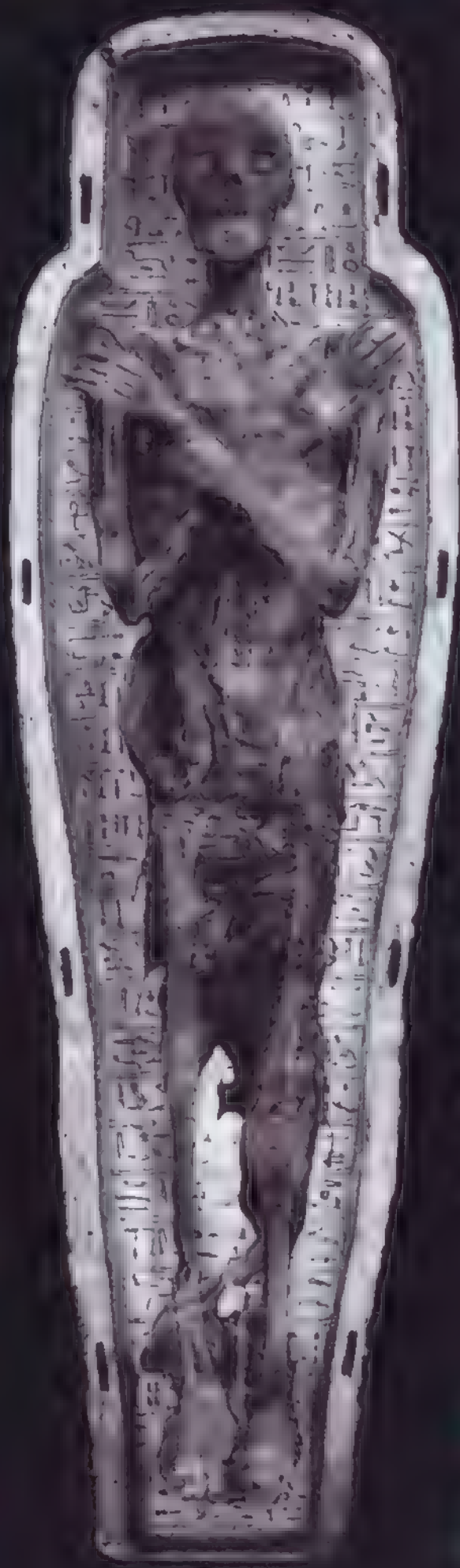
Bubble Bobble 2

If you ever wanted proof that a game doesn't need fancy graphics to be a wonderful game, then *Bubble Bobble 2* would be perfect. Put simply, all you do is jump around, blow bubbles and attack little enemies. At a nice, cheap price it's a game that everyone can enjoy.

ChartTrack

Exhumed

I AM THE WALKING DEAD
UNVEILED I HUNT THE
COME FORTH, BROTHERS
I AM STRONG, I AM STRONG



Sony to attend university

PlayStations installed in student bars



'Scruffy, tax-dodging, slackers take traffic cones off their heads long enough to find another way of work-avoidance', writes ex-student struggling with real life.

PlayStations are to be fitted in 200 student bars across the country, following a sponsorship deal that Sony UK have signed with the National Union of Students. The consoles, which will be installed on display-style pods, will be free to students using the NUS-affiliated bars. Thus they can get in some much-needed practice for the special PlayStation nights also scheduled by NUS entertainment officers.

Sony will help with promotional events by sending the latest software to Student Unions, and competitions will then be held at the colleges and universities, allowing students the chance to win PlayStation software, hardware and merchandising. Third party publishers will also get a chance to display their latest releases. Indeed the first challenge, which was held to coincide with the England v Poland World Cup qualifier on the May 31, featured *JSS Pro* as the main game.

Sounds to us like an excellent reason to continue with your studies and perhaps even enrol for an evening class or two.



The Ultimate accessory

PlayStation carrying case

Have you ever dreamed of owning a heavy-duty PVC case for your PlayStation, which is constructed with wood panels to provide ultimate protection, which allows simple storage within seconds, and which retails for fifty quid? No neither have we. But, yes, you guessed it, one is now available.

The Ultimate Case Co are offering the Ultimate Case as the answer to storage and transportation problems when dealing with your PlayStation. For as 'little' as the price of one game, £49.99, you have a lockable carrying case, ideal for home storage and taking your

PlayStation on holiday with you, or to a friend's place. As the company point out, rather than putting your PlayStation in a cardboard box or a carrier bag (which is a lot cheaper than £50), 'all your bits and pieces just slot into pre-designed slots within seconds', and as they add your PlayStation won't 'get covered with the dreaded dust'.

Available in four 'trendy' colours - Dark Blue, Sky Blue, Yellow and Green - the case can carry a PlayStation, all leads, two pads, two memory cards and 10 games. To find out more details of this 'unique' case, contact The Ultimate Case Co on 0161 339 8846. Or not, as the case may be



In Power this month

and Essential



This month, Europe's largest growing independent PlayStation magazine (that's our sister publication, *PlayStation Power*, to you) includes an unmissable world-exclusive feature on *Tomb Raider 2* and that's just scratching the surface...

There's also another fabulous 68-page, full-colour tip sheet featuring *Soul Blade*, *Tenka* and *Exhumed*; the inside story on Psygnosis' breathtaking '97 line-up; an exposé on who's really getting rich from PlayStation gaming; a free *Excalibur 2555AD* demo disc offer and reviews of *Rage Racer*, *V-Rally*, *Overblood* and more! Oh, and every PlayStation game ever is reviewed and rated.

There is also still a chance that you can pick up the latest *Essential PlayStation*, with its demo disc containing 10 playable games. The next *Essential PlayStation* is currently in production and will have an interesting new look. More on that soon.



GREAT MOMENTS
IN VIDEOGAMING

line you k

RUSH HOUR CAN BE

"More tracks than Ridge Racer and more realistic handling..."

For more
information
visit
www.sony.com

MURDER



"Tokyo Highway Battle is a real shocker."

Seemingly coming from nowhere, this will sell faster than naked pictures of Tiffany from Eastenders."

Total PlayStation

90%



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TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE

READERS
LIVES

What's the score?

Fast times and PlayStation highs

We've had loads of letters, this month, from people trying – and succeeding – to impress us with their best scores. Over the last two months the majority of the fastest times have been for *Wipeout 2097*, *Ridge Racer Revolution* and *Formula 1*. To give other people a chance, we've decided not to print any more times for these games after this issue. It's about time we heard from some of the new kids on the block, so how about some times for the likes of *Rage Racer*, *Porsche Challenge* and *Micro Machines V3*?

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

Simon Douel, Clevedon

Pine Hills	22.91
Chalk Canyon	50.95
SCA Motorplex	39.07
Caprio County Raceway	22.03
Black Sall Valley	31.59
Liberty City	22.47
Ultimate Destruction	31.75

FORMULA 1

This month, the honours for top *Formula 1* driver was shared between two readers.

Michael Clarke, of Exeter, racing as Damon Hill



in the Grand Prix mode

Brazil	1m16.058
Argentina	1m25.329
Spain	1m27.098
Monaco	1m20.160
Canada	1m29.633
UK	1m33.133
Germany	1m37.995
Belgium	1m56.445
Japan	1m49.233
Europe	1m26.355

Simon Douel (again!), Exeter.

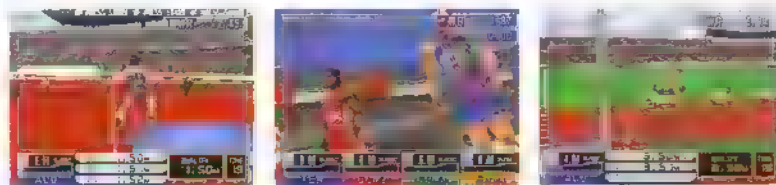
Formula 1 and *Destruction Derby 2* are the latest games that people have been bragging about their abilities on. Are you any better?



Anyone with a strong stomach and a head for heights should consider taking a trip to Blackpool Pleasure Beach to try their latest ride, The PlayStation. Launched earlier this month at a special party, hosted by everyone's favourite karaoke band, Boyzone, the Ride sends you rocketing at 80mph in a steel frame to 250ft, pulling a terrifying 4.6g fastened to a posh cage.

We were invited to the special opening and had a seat reserved on the ride but, unfortunately it coincided with the magazine's deadline so we were unable to try it out. Perhaps we'll try it next time.

Anyone wanting/mad enough to have a go on the ride should contact Blackpool Pleasure Beach ticket office 01253 341033 during office hours. And good luck.



International Track & Field has proved the most popular game for high scoring.

San Marino	1m	32.514
France	1m	21.885
Hungary	1m	17.280
Italy	1m	31.386
Portugal	1m	23.784
Australia	1m	16.825
Bonus Track	1m	16.331

INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD

Andrew Simpson, via e-mail

100m	7.26
110m hurdles	8.32
Javelin	109.83
Hammer	108.42
Discus	92.11
Shot	26.73
High Jump	2.70
Long Jump	11.13
Triple Jump	21.43
Pole Vault	7.80
Swimming	39.12
Overall score	18,325



Really boxing clever

Great new PlayStation designs

Following on from our pictures of customised PlayStations and driving set-ups, we've had loads of pictures sent to us. Some better than others. How someone thinks covering their machine with Spice stickers is customising, we don't know.

The best two we got this month both came from a CF Meers. We particularly liked the *Tomb Raider* one – it seems Lara Croft is getting on the cover of everything at the moment. CF said he was sick of the grey colour and took to his machine with an airbrush. One of his friends was so impressed, he asked him to paint *Crash Bandicoot* all over his machine. So he did!



These are the best examples we've seen yet of customised PlayStations. The *Tomb Raider* and *Crash Bandicoot* designs sent it by CF Meers are excellent. So, does anybody out there think they can do any better?

HE KNOWS
40 WAYS
TO CAUSE
YOU
EXTREME
PAIN!

You only
have a
split-second
to stop him.

VICW VS THE WORLD



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97%
"The one and only great
wrestling game. Period."
Total PlayStation

MENTAL KOMBAT

In this month's head-to-head battle for PlayStation trivia supremacy, Dave Perry takes on... er, Dave Perry. The ex-Games Animal and recent *PSM* Official Questioning star, of bandana fame, takes on his namesake, the programming Dave Perry responsible for *Earthworm Jim*, *Aladdin*, et al. Hey, good luck Dave...



Name: Dave Perry. **Age:** Thirty-something. **Job:** Managing director of Shiny Entertainment. **Favourite games:** *Aladdin*, *Earthworm Jim*, *Earthworm Jim 2*, *MDK*, *Wild 9's*... basically anything that the games guru has designed himself. Now for his greatest test yet...



Name: Dave Perry. **Age:** Twenty-something. **Job:** Ex Games Animal turned-marketing manager with THQ. **Favourite games:** *Wipeout 2097*, *Space Hulk*, *ISS Pro*, *WCW Vs The World* on the PlayStation... the list is endless. Well he is a Games Animal...

We predict...

...that next month's top 50 selling games will look like this. What do you reckon? If you can get any closer to the final 10 than this, with your guess, then we'll send you whichever game is at number one. Answers on a postcard to the usual address, labelled 'Top 50'.

1. (NE) *Rage Racer*
Platinum
2. (NE) *Soul Blade*
Platinum
3. (NE) *ISS Pro*
Konami
4. (NE) *V-Rally*
Electronic Arts
5. (NE) *FIFA '98*
Platinum
6. (NE) *Fade To Black*
Platinum
7. (4) *Need for Speed 2*
Electronic Arts
8. (2) *Rebel Assault*
Virgin
9. (NE) *Road Rash*
Platinum
10. (3) *Dark Forces*
Virgin

QUESTIONS

DAVE PERRY

DAVE PERRY

1. What are the two <i>Star Wars</i> -themed games on PlayStation called?	Dark Forces and...	1/2	Dark Forces and Rebel Assault 2	2/2
2. With which genre is the game <i>Vandal-Hearts</i> linked?	Don't know	0/1	RPG	1/1
3. What is the new power boat game from Sony called?	Don't know	0/1	I'll guess <i>River Race</i>	0/1
4. Who are currently working on a game called <i>G-Police</i> ?	Don't know	0/1	Psygnosis	1/1
5. Name four Namco titles.	Ridge, RR Revolution, Tekken & Tekken 2	4/4	Ridge, RR Revolution, Tekken & Tekken 2	4/4
6. In what year is the Psygnosis game <i>Riot</i> set?	Don't know	0/1	Is it 2097?	1/1
7. Name the lead character in <i>Wild 9's</i> .	Wex	1/1	Andy Cole	0/1
8. What is the Japanese name for <i>Air Race</i> ?	Don't know	0/1	<i>Reciproheat 5000</i>	1/1
9. Describe Dominik Diamond in one word.	Scottish	1/1	Arsehole	1/1
10. Who was known as Dave Perry first?	I'm the only Dave Perry	1/1	There can only be one	1/1

VERDICT

6 - Disappointing performance from the games guru. Perhaps not technical enough for him.

12 - He's not called the Games Animal for nothing. Kept the British end up superbly.

QuizStation



And now the quiz for people not called Dave Perry. Although that's not to say that your entry is barred, should you share the same moniker as our illustrious Mental Kombats contestants. As ever, complete our six sample questions and send them on a postcard to the address below. For the winner, either a copy of *Earthworm Jim 2*, or a secondhand bandana.

Answers on a POSTCARD to:
QuizStation 16, Official UK PlayStation Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries to us by July 17

The questions

- 1) Name the two people who have hosted *GamesMaster*.
- 2) Which *Star Trek* character did our staff writer recently meet?
- 3) Where is this year's E3 going to be held?
- 4) What do Psygnosis think will be the next Christmas number one?
- 5) Who are developing *Moto Racer*?
- 6) Which Theme Park has just launched a PlayStation ride?

Answers to Mental Kombats
1. Dark Forces & Rebel Assault 2. RPG
3. Rapid Racer. 4. Psygnosis. 5. Ridge
Racer. 6. RR. 7. Rage Racer. 8. Namco
Museum Volume 1. 9. 3. 10. 4. 11. 5. 12. 6. 2097. 13. Wex. 14. Reciproheat 5000. 15. Whatever. 16. Dave Perry the 1st!

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92% PC Zone, May '97



ELECTRONIC ARTS

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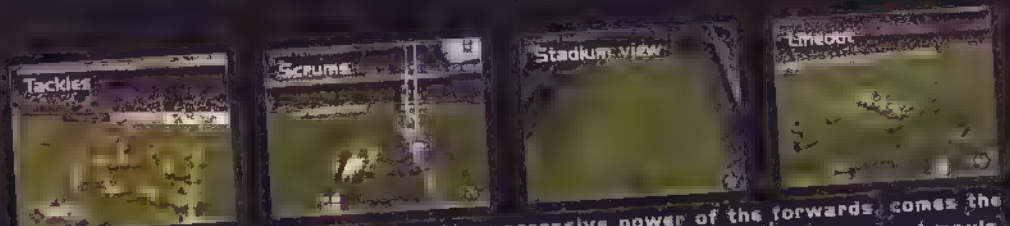
John Berkshire

RA



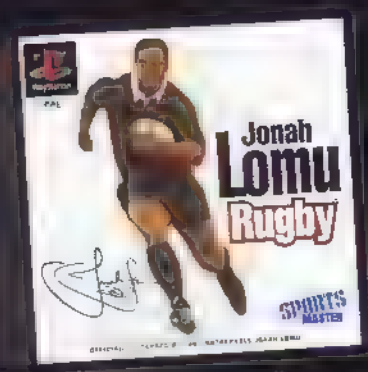
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LOADING

100% COMPLETE



Everyone gets what they want sometimes. I wanted to be lead designer on *Pandemonium 2*. And for my sins, they gave it to me. It's a real choice position. But when it's over, I'll be insane.

My first thought of the day is 'Oh my God, the house is on fire'. Choking on foul fumes, stumble, in a hungover stupor, to the basement. Turns out that the mould in the furnace is burning off into my room. I turn off the heat, it's probably the same mould they use to make San Francisco Sourdough Bread. You can buy loaves of it down on Fisherman's Wharf. Travelers note: Do not go down to the wharf unless you are totally wasted. Better to strap a can of tuna to your face and breathe deeply. Drift back to sleep.

Rick (another designer - we live in packs) pounds on my door. Late. Scramble out of bed. Clothes everywhere. A.I., repeat ALL, of the clothes are dirty. Pick through items that haven't been used to take off my girlfriend's make-up. Top of the list of 'clean' clothes is the Magnum P.I. T-shirt from Hawaii. It takes two hours for the blood in my nose to clear enough for me to finally realise my own stench. I'd forgotten all about dancing the night away in



Photo supplied courtesy of EDGE

'...looking at porno pages leaves that hollow feeling inside which helps with work'. Zak, programmer with Crystal Dynamics, working on *Pandemonium*.

Work, Rest, and PlayStation

this shirt at a party two weeks ago. Unfortunately I only remember this as I'm stuck in the A/V room with four other people making a videotape of the game. At least they're mostly from marketing.

The "Gold Comment" of the week is received at lunch. A sound engineer, complaining about the sound effects for another team, tells me it is easier to make sound effects for *Pandemonium 2*. I say sarcastically, "That's because I'm so freakin' organised". He says, "Yeah, but at least you admit you don't know what the heck you are doing." Fair play.

Our design team all sits together like a big, incestuous family. We turned down private offices to fight in the trenches. Unfortunately, the real fight is fought by everyone else on the team. No time to lay out levels anymore, we must sell our souls instead. The team can look from their desks and see me die slowly. Very funny. Like marketing. Marketing people are fun to hang around with. If you like hanging out with a bunch of junkie whores that is. Fun, but you must shower often and watch your wallet.

I look at naked women in an anthology of Playboy centrefolds on at least six different occasions today in an attempt to figure out what direction to give FMA studio. Moments like this make me stop and think about my job - running weddings at a four-star

Zak - crazy name, crazy guy, as they say. The Hunter S Thompson (or so he'd like to think) of the games industry gives an account of what roughly equates to a day in his life. If you ever wondered why *Pandemonium* was so weird, here's the reason - and now he's working on a sequel. Oh, and beware, American-programmer talk with forked tongue...

restaurant. I learned everything about human nature, and everything about humility there. Nothing like asking for a 10,000 dollar bill from a drunk groom. Still, looking at porno pages leaves that hollow feeling inside which helps with work. At least one of my producers is a woman who isn't offended by obscene material, but expect sexual harassment suits to be filed by all the other women in the company. And rightly so. I go back to programming fulfilled in a shallow way.

Buddha (my boss) comes in today to check on the game. I squirm in my seat as he questions me about the game's progress. He used to say he would laugh at my misery when I moved 'up' in the company. Having laughed loudly, Buddha is now quiet. And not a good quiet. Time for introspection and discipline on my part. It's hard to live happily knowing

Buddha is cursing your name. The California hippie veggie burger I choked down for lunch is turning to acid in my stomach and I resolve to eat meat soon.

Finally finish putting tape together for demo reel. I thank Scott the artist for flying with me on the seat of my pants. He tells me not to invite him on any more last minute runs again. I feel like dying, or at least drinking myself into a coma.

Having spent three hours working on the flying level - still the best part of the game - I take a break. Unfortunately my ride has left without me, so I sit with two packs of cigarettes and a cheap bottle of wine, writing this. I intend to pass out on the sofa in the Romper Room and wake up ready for work tomorrow. At least I know what I'll be wearing.



ON THE JOB



The year that was...

PlayStation time travel

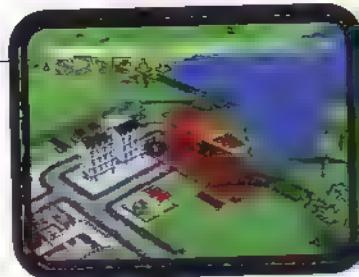
GENERATION



420AD

Chronicles Of The Sword

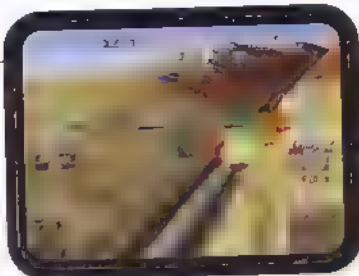
And so life on the PlayStation began. In a country called Albion, later to become Britain. The Royal Family is rife with affairs (who says history never repeats itself?) and young Gawain is the man given the responsibility for restoring calm in the court of King Arthur. Images of the day are slightly murky, but what can you expect from graphics in the 5th century?



2000

Gunship 2000, Sim City 2000, Tempest X

The Millennium is upon us and everybody takes Jarvis' advice to meet up in the year 2000. Games abound. But while Maxis have us building metropolises and implementing ordered civilisations, MicroProse and Interplay maintain that people are just shooting the shit out of polygons.



1999

X-Com: Enemy Unknown

With alien invasion a real threat the world powers band together to save the planet. Despite the massive importance of this project, funding for it is limited. Surely the arts council grant could be shelved for a year so that we aren't all zapped by aliens? Instead a PAYE system is introduced which links financial reward to the number of aliens you eliminate.



2010

Psychic Force

A decade on and Psyber Warriors are the latest upstarts to indulge in urban warfare and a spot of fisticuffs. With ESP (wouldn't you just know it?) at their disposal, these cunning clairvoyants scrap with a bloke called Keith whose aim is to destroy earth. Fights take place within transparent cuboid arenas and... well, let's just say that some people didn't leave that 1999 New Years party in their right minds.



24th Century

Star Gladiators, Defcon 5

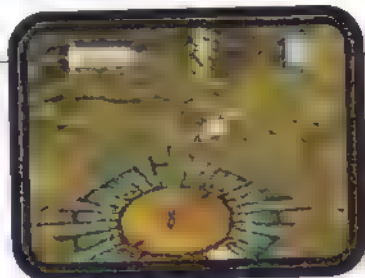
Now this is where it all gets confusing. Four hundred years on, everything seems to have regressed slightly. The fighters in *Star Gladiators* are very similar to those seen 450 years previously in *Tobal No. 1*. And in *Defcon 5* it looks like we've gone all the way back to *Chronicles Of The Sword*. By now a pre-recorded voice is all that's left of the human race.



2097

Wipeout 2097, Riot, G-Police

Suddenly all manner of competition takes place. Hover racers speed around the *Wipeout* tracks, while failed pilots amuse themselves with a version of Rollerball, known as *Riot*. Meanwhile the G-Police are waging war in space with other nations keen to pillage the earth's depleted resources. We've now moved planets, much of the action taking place on a moon of Jupiter.



2555

Excalibur 2555AD

Or so it appeared. But no, here we are, two centuries later, and there are people running around in loin cloths, waving big swords at each other. And here we really have to take issue with the PlayStation historians of the time. Technology has been shunned to the point where there isn't even electricity anymore. We simply don't believe that this is the future, especially as 99 years later, we're back in space again.



GAME

As far as experts know, life on the PlayStation started in 420AD with the Arthurian dilly-dallying of *Chronicles Of The Sword*. It ends in the 31st century, with Mechs walking the earth in search of a scrap. Here's what happens in the intervening 2580 years...

1930

Transport Tycoon

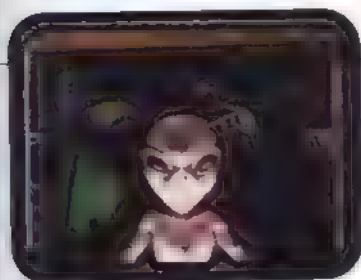
Fifteen hundred years on and somebody comes up with the idea of moving somewhere other than A-bion. So the ancestors of King Arthur take to planes, trains and automobiles and head to a land of Generic Nowhere where they set about becoming greedy transport magnates with capitalist ideals. It'll end in tears.



1935

Agent Armstrong

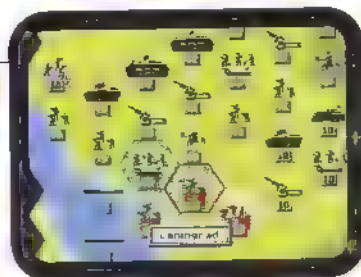
Money being the route of all evil, short-term monetary goals have lead to a world of gangs, guns and dark underworlds. The 'World' (an extension of Generic Nowhere) is on the verge of global domination by The Syndicate, a fiendish criminal cartel. While Agent Armstrong may save the day, a young pretender known as Adolf is on the horizon.



1939

Panzer General & Allied General

The 'World' now has some specific areas: North Africa, for instance, where battles rage over oil, and Russia, where they're scrapping over potatoes and vodka, or something. These games designers, what mag nations they've got... They always come up with some weird little fella (in this case a German dwarf with an improbable 'tache and a silly walk) who is hell-bent on ruling the world. How about some originality, lads?



2048

Total No.1

In the middle of the 21st century, humans are starting to mutate into all manner of life forms (including 8ft chicken men). But surprise, surprise, a few of them are still up for a fight. The pugilists have left their perspex boxes, but the earth has become a mass of pastel-coloured blocky constructions and tunnels. Which seems reason enough for people to get shirty.



2084

Robotron 2084

Mum, Dad and M key are the only humans left on earth, now, and earth itself is just a black void peppered with brightly coloured icons (rather like a night in Blackpool). History has it that the Robotrons were continually trying to rid the world of this remaining human family, but against all odds the three survived. Their offspring then moved on to other games.



2096

Tenka, Blast Chamber

In 2096 everybody has moved in doors again. Most people survive in dark corridors shooting robots and mutants as part of their everyday life. For relaxation you'd have thought a nice swim or the odd pint would be good, but instead they seek 'sport' in the form of *Blast Chamber*. The game involves having a bomb strapped to your back, the aim being to diffuse it within a given time-limit. People start to remember boxing fondly.



3037

StarFighter 3000

Just like *Gunship 2000*. Surely this can't be right? A thousand years have passed and the same sparse polygon world is still there, which shows no signs of the comings and goings of the millennium. History may repeat itself, but it ain't looking a little better. Really progress?



31st Century

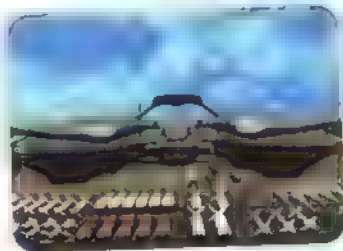
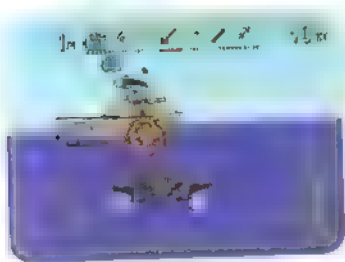
MechWarrior 2

It all ends with 100ft robots doing battle for the planet. Over 2500 years have passed since the start of videogames and this is the best we can come up with? Still using the same old cockpit controls, while great hunks of iron hurtle around, shooting missiles at each other? We say, 'O. History, No.' Something just doesn't add up.

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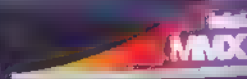


an all-out attack on the big hydrofoil

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PrePlay | Formula One '97

CIRCUIT TRAINING

Murray, Damon, Michael, Jacques.

The boys are back in town and the Formula One soap opera is returning to the PlayStation. Can we wait until September?

Psygnos's *F1* remains one of the PlayStation's best-loved and best-selling titles. Released some 18 months ago, it became a benchmark for Sony's console, proving that the machine could compete with high-end PCs, and for a fraction of the cost. Virtually every PlayStation owner is aware of the game's existence and you'll be heartened to learn that Bizarre Creations are in the throes of completing the sequel, which bears the official 1997 FIA licence.

Reconditioned

However, the sequel is more than just a souped-up version of the original. Bizarre's Sarah Dixon elucidates: 'There are lots of improvements we wanted to make and features we didn't have time to add. We've got the whole game running in high resolution, now, and have added an all-new environment. The Grand Prix mode is headed more towards a



[1] The arcade section of the sequel is far more spectacular. You can powerslide à la *Ridge Racer*. [2] Of course, some of the crashes might not be realistic - but who cares?

full sim, and the arcade has become more of a racer's blast. Also, the AI has been completely re-written, and is far more realistic than the first. There's now a split screen mode, driver's cockpit mode, and a new dual commentator commentary script.

Although the arcade section of the original was eminently driveable, many

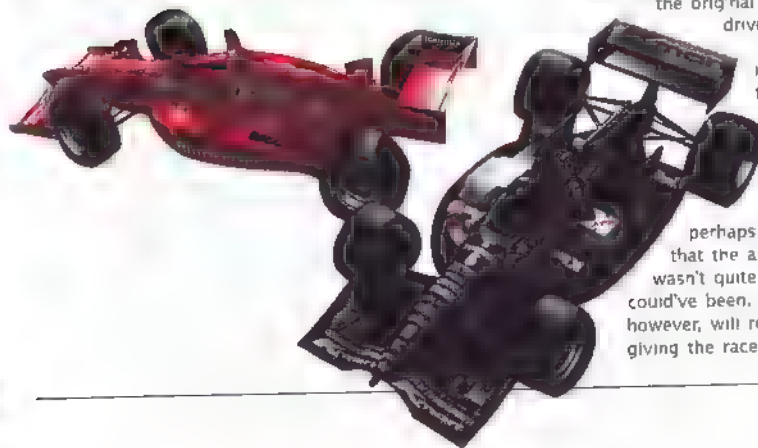
thought it adhered rather too closely to the physics of motor racing. PlayStation gamers brought up on a diet of *Ridge Racer* were

perhaps a little dismayed that the arcade experience wasn't quite as exciting as it could've been. The sequel, however, will redress the balance, giving the racers an option to

powerslide the cars around corners. Forgotten are the 'rules' of Formula One; spectacular smashes are the order of the day.

Most agreed that the engine of the original was excellent but Bizarre think it has been much improved. 'There are many enhancements to the engine, some technical, some visual,' explains Sarah. 'It's a lot more stable now and runs at a constant 30fps by dynamically adjusting the draw distance. There were also a few bottlenecks in the code that have

Racers are now able to
around corners... are
the order of the day



■ PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Bizarre Creations	■ STYLE:	Racing game
■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One or two



(1) The original incarnation of *Formula One* utilised a link option but not many gamers have the facility to use this. The sequel will benefit hugely from the two-player, split-screen option. (2) Coders Bizarre Creations have added an increased number of variable weather effects which may change during the race. (3) Crashes promise to be spectacular. (4) And we'll still probably spend a lot of time off track.

been ironed out and the hi-res dramatically improves the whole appearance of the game.'

Although the first incarnation had a link-up option, many gamers were disappointed that there was no two-player, split-screen game. Again, this has been redressed and, as Sarah reckons, with minimal fuss. 'There is slightly less of a draw distance in split screen but it is not really noticeable especially since there is so much going on, on screen. The split-screen game runs at the same frame rate as the original game, although with fewer cars. There is also the option of horizontal or vertical splits depending on the user preference.'

Murray Walker returns to provide his own inimitable style of racing commentary, this time with a co-commentator, Martin Brundle. Another addition in the Grand Prix section of the game is that of a voice from the pit lane, advising you of the current state of your car (drivers in 'real life' are equipped with headsets which connect them to their team).

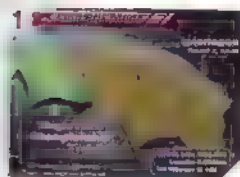
Every driver from every team is featured, as is every circuit from the 1997 season, but then we've come to expect this level of detail in *Formula One*. The team have worked hard in improving every aspect of the game both in terms of gameplay and in the cosmetics of the thing. There will be a new cockpit view with working dials and mirrors. Visually,

there will be far more detail with cars bursting into flames, gravel on the tracks, dust and tyre marks. Bizarre have spent more time on the AI of the drivers' behavioural patterns - so, for instance, Michael Schumacher will drive aggressively and go for the gaps that other drivers might not.

The addition of a split screen option, together with the improvements in gameplay should ensure that *F1 '97* departs from the shelves with haste when it arrives in September.



The split-screen game also has the option of depending on the user preference



(1) Psygnosis have secured the 1997 FIA licence. This allows them to use all the official circuits and the drivers. (2) There is a cockpit view with mirrors and dials.



PORSCHE AND PLAYSTATION JOIN FORCES TO BRING THE MOST REALISTIC DRIVING GAME OF ALL TIME

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PrePlay | Colony Wars

Forbidden Planet

Psygnosis are looking to succeed where many have failed. The field of arcade space combat is littered with over-ambitious casualties and FMV-obsessed fiascos. Can they pull it off?



(1) The team include some of the folk that worked on the *Wipeout* games. (2) *CW* has been influenced by both the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* series of films. (3) Although the screen shots are dark, the lighting is superb.

Colony Wars is being coded and designed by members of the team who worked on the hugely successful *Wipeout* games. It's a space combat game, with the emphasis placed firmly on arcade action; a popular style of game. Indeed, looking back over preceding months, one discovers Namco's disappointing *Starblade*, the FMV-heavy *Creature Shock* and *Wing Commander IV*, with only the latter distinguishing itself.

Psygnosis are keen to set the record straight, though, as producer **Andy Satterthwaite** explains: 'Our main aim has been to make the space combat

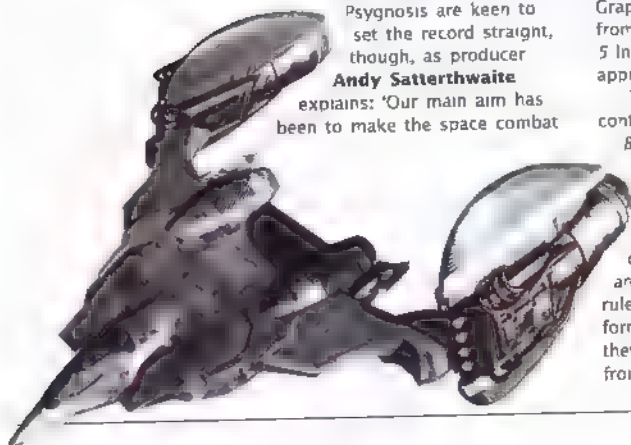
as fun as possible, concentrating on close combat with other ships rather than shoot-the-dot-in-the-distance stuff. Our sense of scale should make things involving too Graphically we've taken our cue from TV shows such as *Babylon 5*. Instead of the rather bland approach of other games'.

The plot is *Star Wars*-ian in content, the team influenced by *Babylon 5*, the Lucas epics and the *Star Trek* series. A population boom has seen Earth expand its empire into the solar system and our friends from planets afar are unhappy at Earth's dictatorial rule. A 'League of Free Worlds' is formed and after an early victory, they realise they can break free from the tyrannical empire and

recruit a host of young guns, one of which is you.

'We have a non-linear mission structure', reckons Andy. 'The player starts at the beginning and, depending on whether they succeed or fail, they move down a complex tree which dictates which part of the story unfolds. The whole game should feel like a constantly evolving story. The player decides the outcome, but it should feel very involving.'

There are some 70 missions in all, each split into 18 acts with a further six training missions. The game features over 15 minutes of cinematic rendered sequences, together with voiceovers to describe the unfolding drama. Psygnosis are keen that the gamer isn't simply



■ PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ STYLE:	Shoot 'em up
■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ PLAYERS:	One



(1) The 3D world is textured and light-sourced. (2) And the craft are all rendered. (3) The graphics are all hi-res (512 x 240 resolution). (4) You can get mission info from your ship computer. (5) There are 50 craft.

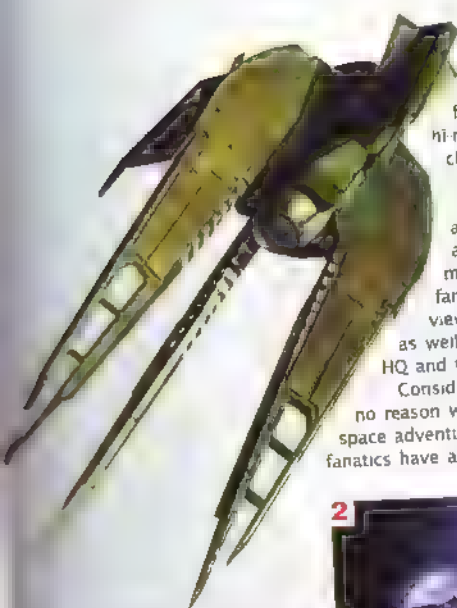
jumped with one continual task over a series of missions, so they've included six different craft for the pilot to fly for the particular commission in hand. At varying times, you may be asked to scout, bomb,

intercept, protect civilian craft, or engage in heavy assault combat.

Colony Wars is one of the few games to utilise the PlayStation's hi-res capabilities and the visuals are clinical and fast-moving. The 3D space environment is fully-textured and light-sourced, with planets, stars and asteroids littering the gaming area. Impressive, too, are the texture-mapped spaceships which leave fantastic trails as they swoop. You can view the craft internally and externally,

as well as receive mission briefings from HQ and through the ship's computer.

Considering the team's background, there's no reason why *CW* shouldn't be the epic space adventure both gamers and sci-fi fanatics have always been promised.



(1) You can view your spacecraft from both inside the cockpit and out. (2) The laser effects and flare trails are some of the best ever seen.

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Codemasters' **Full Timeplay**

PrePlay **Moto Racer**



We've **blasted** around tracks in cars, jet skis and even weird floaty things but never bikes. Delphine are about to change gear

Take a look at the shelves of any computer games shop and you'll see loads of really good car racing games. Take another look for a decent motorbike racing game and you'll be completely stuck.

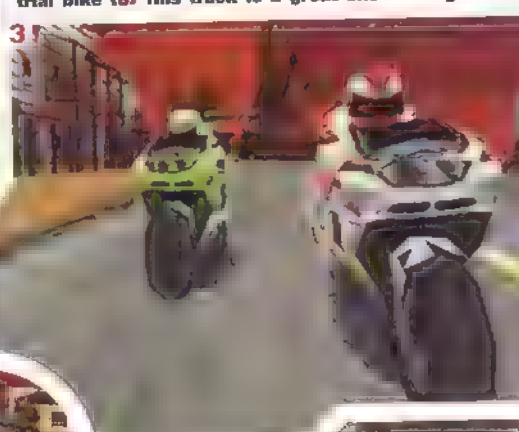
Fortunately it looks like this trend is set to change with Delphine's *Moto Racer*. Designed intentionally to give the PlayStation its first arcade-style bike racer, the title looks set to be one of the most exciting racing games on the console.

The game can be played in three modes. The first, Practice mode, allows you to try any of the tracks, giving you the chance to familiarise yourself with them. The second option is to race one track at a time, with the final option pitting you against 24 racers in the Championship mode. Initially there are nine tracks to race, but after a successful championship season, special tracks can be added. One interesting touch is the inclusion of tracks designed for pure speed and others designed for mud racing, rather like speedway.

The Great Wall of China course proved to be a particular favourite in the office. With absolutely no respect for one of



(1) One of the best tracks. (2) The game will have loads of different bikes to race. (3) The replay mode gives you a wonderful view of the race. (4) Another trial bike (5) This track is a great one for beginners.



the most revered structures in the whole world, 20 moto cross bikes tear along the Wall.

The game adds many deft touches to improve the whole experience of racing. The first few times you race each track, it's quite common for you to notice little things the developers have thrown into the game, a great example being when racing through the desert track: if you look carefully you'll be able to see a UFO fly across the screen.

To help you round these tracks there are a variety of bikes

from which to choose: zip along at pace on incredibly fast superbikes or plough across country on powerful off-landers. Each bike has its pros and cons but you'll find that they'll all do a decent job to get you round the courses.

The game can be viewed in a variety of modes, but our preferred angle is the saddle view. You feel like you're shifting, and when you take a corner at speed the handlebars really judder. *Moto Racer* is one to watch out for.



■ PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts** ■ RELEASE DATE: **August '97**
 ■ DEVELOPER: **Delphine Software Int.** ■ ORIGIN: **France**

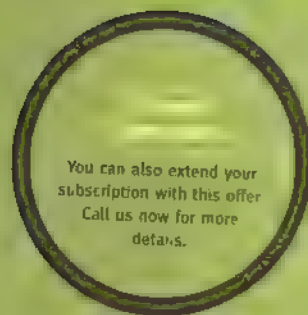
■ PLAYERS: **One**
 ■ STYLE: **Motorbike Racing**

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ORCS ON THE DARK SIDE

Frankie used to think war was good for 'absolutely nothing'.

The current vogue among programmers, though, is that there's a lot of scope for 'cash from conflict'. EA are the latest to join the PlayStation war party...

Ever since *Command & Conquer* hit the PlayStation, last Christmas, developers have been rushing to introduce the next big real-time 3D wargame to the market. A quick scan of any PlayStation magazine will reveal at least three other 3D military strategy games currently in development.

A classic on the PC, *Warcraft* 2 takes the basic 3D idea and shifts it into 52 levels of a fantasy environment, pitching humans against their eternal foe, the orcs. The two clans have very different society structures. Whereas the humans have a huge variety of dwellings, from wonderful, medieval castles for the rich to little hovels for the peasants - the orcs live

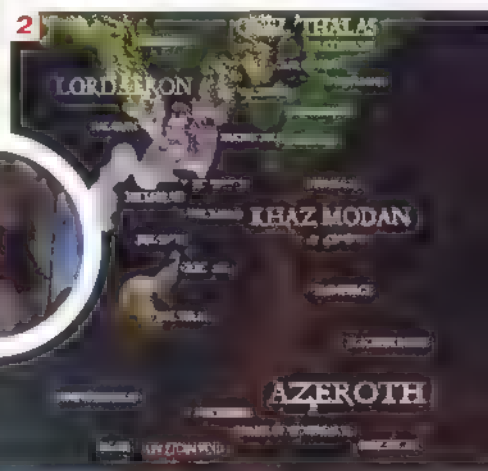
together in the same squalor, forever drinking and fighting.



The basic idea of the game involves empire building. By developing wealth you are able to buy greater power, allowing you to take on stronger enemies, and so on. There are a number of ways you can work towards this greater wealth, but the best way is simply to conquer your enemies in battle. During skirmishes, care should be taken with all your people as they each have a specific role within the war effort. The orc peons, for example, are the basic building units that mine the raw materials you need to build your empire. Without the peons you wouldn't be able to build your houses and develop weapons. Other classes include troll axe-throwers and the dastardly Death Night wizards.

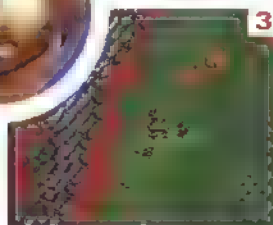
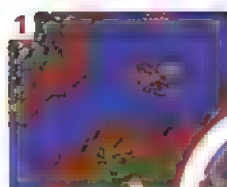
Where *Warcraft 2* really differs from other real-time wargames, though, is the ability to fight in any arena, be it land, sea or air.

[1] The humans make their way through the forest, not knowing that death is just around the corner. [2] Each scenario has a detailed map to study.



For example, when you fight on the seas you start off with a little rowing boat, but given more money, you can work your way up to huge galleons. And while you're at sea it's worth looking out for oil slicks, as these tell you where to dig for oil to increase your wealth and power.

The PlayStation version will feature an enhanced version of the main game and the additional *Beyond The Portal* expansion pack. Expect a full review of the whole lot in the next couple of issues.



[1] A lot of the action takes place on water. [2] Not a screen you want to see often... but you will. [3] It only takes a few minutes to learn how to play the game.

By B. ISHER

Electronic Arts

■ RELEASE DATE

July

■ PLAYERS:

One to two

■ DEVELOPER:

Blizzard

■ ORIGIN:

United States

■ STYLE:

Real-time wargame

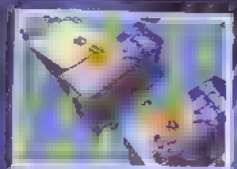
Break-neck racing for 1-8 addicts. 48 Head-spinning 3D tracks. 32 Vehicles. Loads of weapons.

"THE GREATEST MULTI-PLAYER GAME FOR THE PLAYSTATION"

Starting's easy. Stopping's the hard part.



MAXIMUM MULTI-PLAYER RACING



9/10 Official PlayStation magazine, 9/10 PlayStation FFS, 84% PlayStation Plus,
92% Play magazine, 9/10 PlayStation Power, 91% Gamecenter, 5/5 G&G.



Codemasters  pure gameplay

www.codemasters.com



PrePlay | Roscoe McQueen

FIRESTARTER

There is a prodigious firestarter, and he owns a sky scraper.
There is a firefighter, with a famous surname.
Welcome a new superhero...

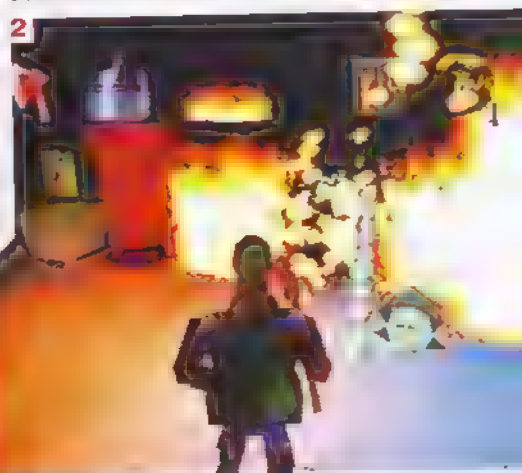
Well, we might as well get the title out of the way for (fire) starters. The surname of our friend Roscoe must, one presumes, relate to a certain Steve McQueen, who played one of the lead roles in Seventies disaster movie *Towering Inferno*. 'But why?', you cry. Roscoe, unusually for a videogame character, must extinguish flames in another towering inferno in order to emerge victorious against evil Sylvester T. Square.

Yes, for Roscoe McQueen ('The First Man On The Scene', apparently) is the first firefighter for the PlayStation. An all-American hero, blond of barnet, granite of jaw and custodian of hose and axe. The game is a full

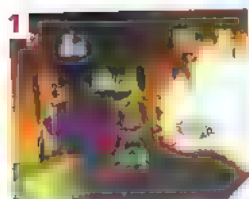


on polygonal 3D affair, viewed in similar perspective to *Tomb Raider*, only without the fixed to the back-of-Lara's head vertiginous feel. The programmers, Slippery Snake (slither eyes to opposite page for brief overview), have used a cunning system to ensure the camera doesn't swing wildly. They've ensured that Roscoe can never stand right next to a wall by placing objects adjacent, thereby reducing the 'whooshing' effect. And it works tremendously well.

(1) The action is viewed from above and behind Roscoe. (2) The water icon relates to your hose.



The game is a full-on polygonal 3D affair, viewed in similar perspective to *Tomb Raider*

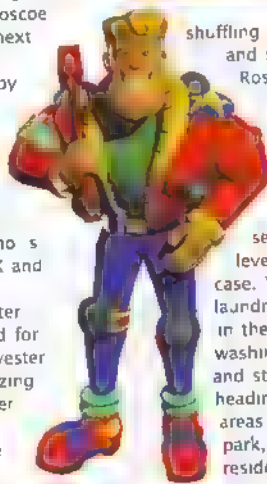


(1) Robots start fires around Tower X.
(2) Extinguish 'em.



Tower threat

The towering inferno is actually called Tower X and is owned by the aforementioned Sylvester Square. Essentially, and for plotular purposes, Sylvester has gone bonkers, seizing control of the computer mainframe to wreak havoc and destroy the building. Robots are



shuffling along corridors and starting fires.

Roscoe must extinguish the flames and part company with the twisted firestarters.

The game is set over a number of levels, or floors in this case. You begin in the laundry which is housed in the basement where washing machines hum and steam hisses, before heading onto themed areas such as the car park, gym, shop and residential floor.

■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Slippery Snake Studio	■ STYLE:	Platform/action
■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One



[1] Roscoe can pick up a variety of items as he journeys through the skyscraper. The throwing axe takes out the robots.
[2] The temperature gauge is dangerously high. It'll blow.

Accompanying Roscoe on this epic journey is a little robot called Lucky Digit who passes on helpful hints and tips – lets you know where the fires are, that kind of thing. Roscoe starts with just an axe and hose. The former's useful for taking out robots and knocking down doors, and the hose... well, use your imagination. Along the way,

Roscoe can pick up water bombs, CO₂ and a throwing axe.

From what we've seen, *Roscoe McQueen* is certainly an attempt at doing something a little different. Visually, it looks very good and the *Tomb Raider*-esque perspective should do it many a favour. Look out for a demo in the not too distant future.



Slippery Snake Studio



Roscoe McQueen was already twinkling in the eyes of folk before the studio was formed. The development team then formed Slippery Snake and were contracted by Sony to dot the i's, cross the t's and polish the polygons for a PlayStation debut. Slippery Snake are based in Telford and have only been in existence for a few months, their members numbering 12. *Roscoe* should make an excellent introduction to the world of PlayStation gaming.



PrePlay | Interplay line-up

SHINE ON!

Having taken the PC world by storm with their monster hit, **MDK**, Shiny Entertainment are heading for similar success on the PlayStation. Welcome **MDK** and platform game **Wild 9's**



MDK

■ PUBLISHER:	Interplay
■ DEVELOPER:	Shiny
■ RELEASE DATE:	Autumn
■ ORIGIN:	United States

There have been few successes like **MDK** in recent years. After months of publicity, people started to doubt whether the game would be as good as it was made out to be. It was. And now PlayStation owners need only wait a few more weeks for their own version.

MDK (aka *Murder, Death, Kill*) is set far into the distant future,

at a time when the 'streams' have become common place. The streams are tubes of pure energy that span the universe, linking galaxy to galaxy, planet with planet. A source of pure energy, mankind finds a way of tapping into the streams and solves the world's energy problems overnight. Unfortunately the streams have a rather nasty downside, as they are the motorways of the 'Stream-Riders' - a terrible bunch of aliens who travel from world to world devastating all cities in their path.

Killing machine

At the time the Stream Riders attack the Earth, your character, Kurt, is in orbit with good friend Dr Fluke Hawkins. After witnessing this, they decide to help. And as it happens, Dr Fluke is a dab hand with weapon design so he whips up an incredible gun/suit for you to wear when you take out the bad guys running the cities.

Although **MDK** may share the same heritage as *Doom* or *Quake*,



coders Shiny have spent time developing the ideas and design to ensure that it stands out. The most dramatic change is the perspective. Unusually for this type of game, most of it is played in third person perspective. Although it may sound strange, it actually improves the game. Rather than just looking at windows and doors, you see yourself walk through them; more importantly, you see Kurt being hit by weapon fire, thus helping you to avoid it.

Perhaps the best option is the much-vaunted sniper mode which puts you behind the sights of the gun, so you effectively see through Kurt's eyes. This can be an amazingly useful way of dealing with some of the bigger



[1] Now that's what you call an impressive baddy. It's huge! [2, 3] Expect lots more atmospheric scenes. [4] To save time, you can fly from level to level.



[1] The sniper mode. You can pick the off an elephant. C surfs, too. Awesome.

enemies. The graphics are indeed impressive with some fantastic 3D scaling as you move the gun sights from target to target.

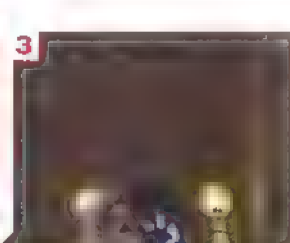
Given its amazing following and reputation, MDK is bound to be a huge success when released later this year.

Wild 9's

■ PUBLISHER:	Interplay
■ DEVELOPER:	Shiny
■ RELEASE DATE:	Late autumn
■ ORIGIN:	United States

Having started out working on platform games (*Earthworm Jim 2*), Shiny Entertainment are going back to their roots with their latest creation for the PlayStation, *Wild 9's*.

The game's plot is based around a numerologist's nightmare, seeing you flung into battle against the evil Karn. He's kidnapped eight of your best friends and you have to work



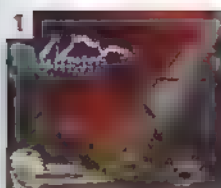
(1) *Wild 9's* is only in its early stages but it's already looking good. **(2)** It couldn't be a platform game without a lot of fire. **(3)** Wex will have to face some of the meanest baddies on the PlayStation.

your way through eight arduous levels until you finally meet up with said evil overlord.

All credit to the developers for the amount of thought that has gone into the design and overall 'look' of *Wild 9's*. A great example of this is the baddy, Tank. Band he hunts using sonar echoes, so any noise you make immediately gives your position away. This can be very tricky, but can be used to your advantage by making a noise close to another bad guy, prompting Tank to firing missiles in his direction while you

scarper off sharpish.

The same level of attention has gone into the level design. Instead of opting for the pseudo 3D perspective of games such as *Crash Bandicoot* or *Pandemonium*, Shiny have tried to make the game fully 3D with the main character, Wex, able to interact with everything he sees. They've said the finished article should be a *Mario*-beater. A bold claim, and one we'll be able to check out later on in the year when we get hold of a finished copy of the game.



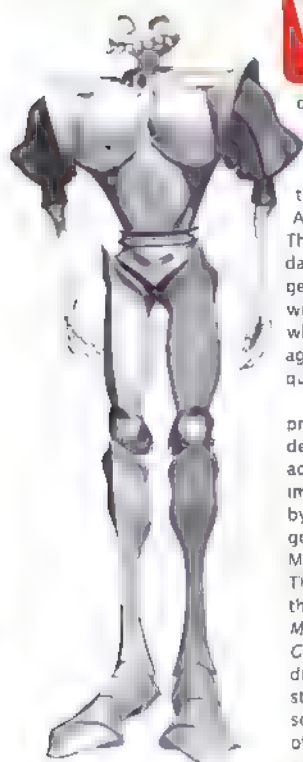
(1) Wex comes fully armed - don't mess. **(2)** Be very careful near the generators.

TRASH IT



SKELETON WARRIOR

Millennium Software, perhaps most famous for their *James Pond* platform character, step back into the PlayStation arena...



W hose of you who have been playing computer games for a number of years may well be aware of *MediEvil's* developers, Millennium. In the past, they've produced the *James Pond* trilogy of platform games, as well as the *Brutal Sports* series for the Amiga and other platforms. Their only PlayStation title to date, however, is *Defcon 5*, the genre hopping adventure game with bits of *Doom*-style shooting which appeared some 18 months ago. And then they went a little quiet.

MediEvil is set to heighten the profile of the Cambridge-based developers. It's a 3D action adventure which, if initial impressions are anything to go by (and they often are), looks as good, if not better, than anything Millennium have done in the past. The designers are unashamed in their acknowledgement of *MediEvil's* influences. Capcom's *Chouh's 'N' Ghosts* is not wildly dissimilar in terms of gaming style, a style which includes the solving of puzzles, the shooting of foe and a good deal of exploration. The design team also

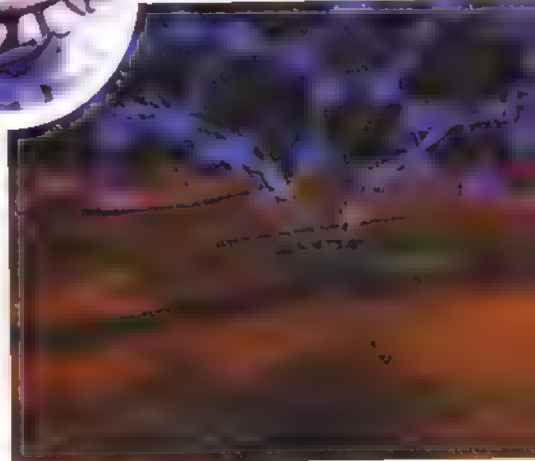
Each level has a distinct graphical style, each contains a fiendish guardian character and there are over 50 enemy types



cite the Tim Burton film *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *The Addams Family* as work which has impressed upon them. This should be sparking among some of you that *MediEvil* contains a certain element of dark humour.

Let's talk about the plot. As one might expect, the game is set in days of yore, between the Ice Age and Industrial Revolution. A saucy sorcerer, named Zarok, has cast a spell over a nation and locked them in night-time. While the good denizens do their best, Zarok steals their energy, an energy so powerful that it has tickled the privates of the long-dead beneath

[1] The hero of *MediEvil*, Sir Daniel Fortesque, a long-dead knight who returns to life in order to save the world from the evil Zarok. [2] The game is set in a real-time 3D environment and combines elements of the shoot 'em up and adventure genres. [3] There are some 30 levels to tackle and over 50 enemies.



■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Millennium	■ STYLE:	Action/adventure
■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One

the ground and brought them back to life. As luck would prevail, one revived skeletal chap happens to be a knight named Sir Danie, Fortesque, and he's the game's hero.

And herein follows 30 levels of action, as Sir Dan attempts to track and destroy Zarok. Each of the levels has a distinct graphical style, each contains a fiendish guardian character – usually a monster or demon – and there are more than 50 different enemy types. These range from mps, bats, gargoyes and wolves, to zombies, lunatics and the undead. When you tackle the ghost ship level, there are even skeletal pirates to hack away at. Other levels include the graveyard, a village, an asylum, a forest and Hangman's Hill. Shudder.

Sir Dan begins the mission with only a sword, but en route there's a shield to collect and a commendable array of potions. He can also garner daggers, axes, crossbows, spears and chicken drumsticks (honest).

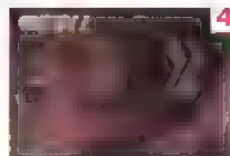
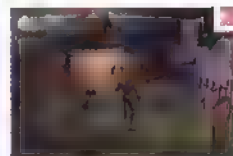
MediEvil is viewed from the third person perspective through



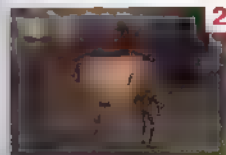
[1] Sir Dan has an amiable side-kick, Morten the Earthworm, and in some of the sub-missions, you take control of the slithery fellow.

[2] The missions are set in a variety of different graphical locations, from graveyards, to ghost ships, to asylums and haunted villages.

[3] The 3D third-person view uses a dynamic camera. **[4]** The game has a spooky feel to it. **[5]** Look out for the end-of-level bosses.



a dynamic, constantly shifting camera. Sir Dan has full freedom of movement throughout the 3D environment. The graphics are beautifully crafted (Sir Dan is made up of some 350 polygons), and there's light sourcing in abundance. Providing Millennium can balance the finery with well thought-out level design, *MediEvil* should be a big hit this autumn.



[1] *MediEvil* is inspired by the filmic work of Tim Burton, particularly *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. **[2]** There are plenty of sub-missions.



Rage
Software plc



FIRST FRONTIER

After waiting **two years** for a decent *Star Trek* game, PlayStation owners can finally **take control** of the **USS Enterprise** and study at the famous **Starfleet Academy** in Interplay's new sci-fi adventure

People accustomed to playing *Star Trek* games – wandering around strange alien cities, in search of crew members, or trying to help out an old, dying civilization – will be pleased to hear that Interplay have ditched all this nonsense and gone for an all-out blaster with *Starfleet Academy*. Instead of boldly going where no man has gone before with the USS Enterprise NCC 1701A, immediately, you play a raw recruit at the prestigious Starfleet Academy in Pres do, near San Francisco. As part of the last two



(1) A Klingon battle cruiser takes one right in the engine room. (2) Each ship is crisply drawn with some impressive textures and excellent explosions.



years of your command degree you face a series of arduous tests before they'll let you anywhere near an actual Starfleet ship.

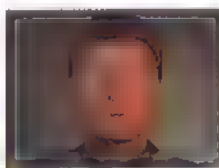
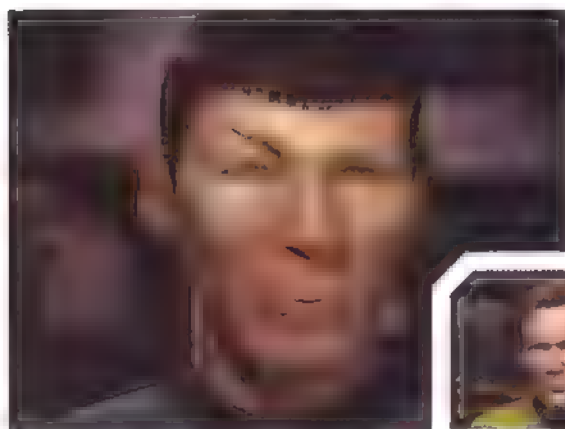
Put to the test

The game is set over 35 adventures, during which time you'll have to learn all the ins and outs of flying interstellar craft, while also coping with internal politics, complex subplots and the famous Kobayashi Maru test. For anyone unfamiliar with the opening scene of the second *Star Trek* film, *The Wrath of Khan*, this test forces you to

decide whether to enter the Neutral Zone to rescue a freighter from a Klingon attack, knowing you'll be committing an act of war by doing so.

Starfleet Academy features an impressive collection of craft from the series and films, ranging from the small Runabouts used for tuition to the illustrious USS Enterprise, to a full complement of Roman Warbirds and Klingons battlecruisers. Each craft has been meticulously drawn and is made up of hundreds of polygons each with highly detailed textures.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the game, though, is



If you think these look impressive, you ought to see them moving. We've not seen pre-rendered scenes like this outside of a Hollywood film. If you watch them from a distance, or if you're short-sighted, it'll look like you're watching the series. Well worth looking out for.

■ PUBLISHER:	Interplay	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ STYLE:	Space strategy
■ RELEASE DATE:	Winter '97	■ PLAYERS:	One

the inclusion of some of the characters from the original series. For the first time in a game, players will be able to interact with those Gods of *Trek*, Kirk, Chekov and Sulu, in a series of FMV videos. They'll be there to provide you with instructions throughout the game and give

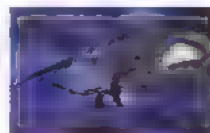
you help whenever you need it.

To give the game an accurate feel, Interplay have called on the services of Dennis McCarthy, composer of the soundtracks for TV series *Deep Space Nine*, to score the in-game music, and Hollywood scriptwriters Bill Bridge, Dan and Andrew Greenberg to write the plot.

Starfleet will be beamed on to the shelves later this year. If this isn't enough to keep everyone happy, you'll just have to wait for the next *Star Trek* game, *The Secret Of Vulcan*. Due for release in 1998, details are limited but we should be able to bring you more details as soon as we get them.



The Fantastic Four



USS Enterprise

What more can you say about this first Enterprise, so cool that NASA named a space shuttle after it. It still remains the Federation's top ship. Even the Borg couldn't destroy it.

USS Reliant

A great little Enterprise wannabe. The Miranda class craft are mainly used as a science vessels and had a starring role in *Star Trek 2, The Wrath Of Khan*. A lot more classy than the three-wheeled version.

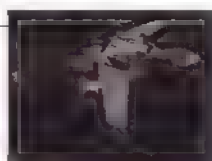


Romulan Bird Of Prey

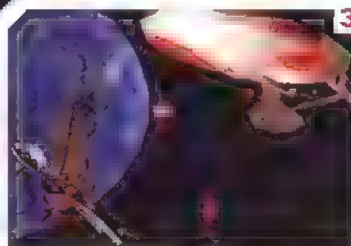
What a ship. You knew, as soon as these appeared, you were in trouble. Armed to the teeth and piloted by the vicious, calculating Romulans, it certainly wasn't a ship to mess with. Nasty paint job, though.

Klingon Cruisers

The first ship in *Star Trek* to have a cloaking device but it had to de-cloak to fire. A very mean ship but proved extremely useful in *Star Trek IV* after the Enterprise had been destroyed. The second best *Star Trek* ship ever!



1) The bridge of the Enterprise. You can almost hear the music. 2) Here's where you discover if you learnt anything at Starfleet Academy. 3) More fighting.



PrePlay **Power Boat**

wet dreams

As the PlayStation rides on the crest of a wave, a number of racing games have literally decided to do the same. Latest to dip its toe in the 32-bit waters is *Power Boat*. Time for PSM to get wet, wet, wet...



Until the 32 bit revolution, technology predominantly restricted racing games to land-based arenas. But recently there's been a change in the terra firma bias, with games such as *Jet Rider*. Soon *Air Race* from THQ and *Rapid Racer* from Sony will also join the market.

Stealing a lead on both of these games is *Power Boat*, from Interplay. The game takes a realistic look at water-based racing, something which involved developers East Point Software spending a lot of time perfecting the fluid dynamics of water and its effects.

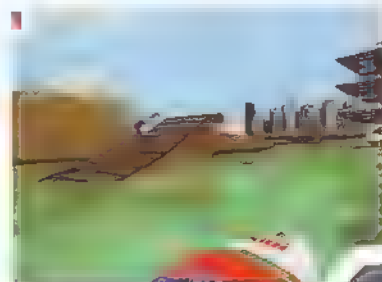


There are three different ways to play *Power Boat*. Initially the Championship mode only allows you to race the first three tracks. If you succeed in these, however, you'll be able to qualify for the next stages, and so on, until you either win the Championship or die in a flaming fireball. Not nice.

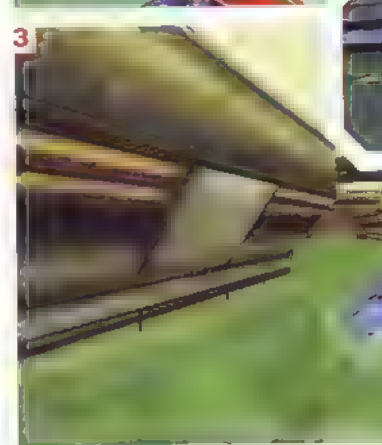
The next option is the Slalom game which plays as it sounds, with your handling prowess being tested to the full. The final test is the Arcade level, where you can try all the fancy jumps and short cuts without worrying about not qualifying.

Power Boat will feature nine tracks altogether, with each track varying greatly from the others. For instance, the Japanese course sees you spashing around Mount Fuji against a night-time background of hi-rise, hi-tech buildings. Other places to visit include the Amazon River, Monaco and even Russia. The tracks increase in difficulty until you face the wrath of the New York waters. Not only is this track stupidly hard, but you also have to contend with things continually falling into your path, leaving only a boat's width to squeeze through.

As you would expect, the game is packed with the now compulsory short cuts and special jumps. So, for instance, if you zip through the mouth of an Amazon statue at just the right speed



[1] Nice-looking jump, but why's the water green? [2] Expect loads of boats to race against. [3] Some of the graphics are very smart. Take a look at the reflections in the water.



you'll end up miles in front of the opposition; judge it wrong, of course, and you'll crumple into a pathetic heap.

Power Boat is packed with features such as jumps, obstacles, variable weather, and nasty collisions. It should be well worth a review when it's released later this year and, rest assured, we'll give it one.



[1] Racing through the New York docks. [2] Pretty crap dashboard, wouldn't you agree? Nice wing mirrors, though.

DEVELOPER: Interplay Productions Ltd ■ RELEASE DATE:

Autumn ■ PLAYERS:

One

DISTRIBUTOR: East Point Software ■ ORIGIN:

United Kingdom ■ STYLE:

Racing game





PS
ROM

1 OR 2 PLAYER

FOR 2 PLAYER

PURELY ABOUT RACING

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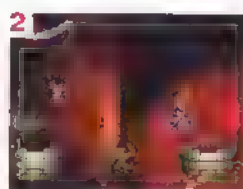
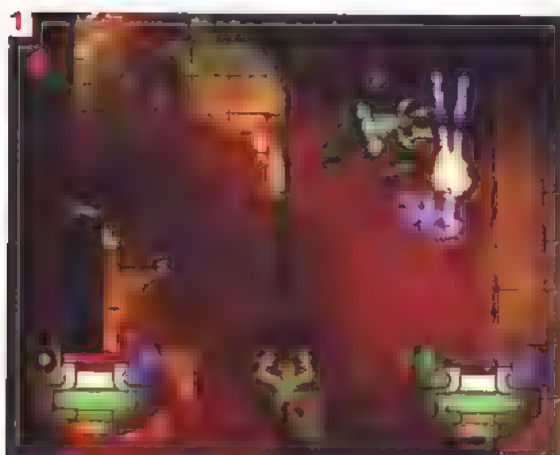
Speedster



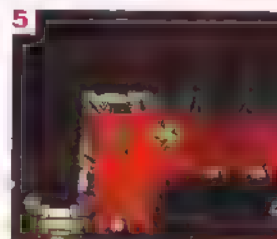
PrePlay | Machine Hunter



Yet again robots have taken over the planet, and yet again it's your job to stop the mechanical mayhem. Isn't the future such a predictable place?



(1, 2) The two-player, split-screen option works very well. (3) Weird symbolism runs throughout the game. (4) The obligatory rendered intro. (5) Here's one of the hostages you have to rescue.



time to go back to the future again. technology has progressed to such a level that all menial tasks are performed by semi-intelligent robots. Man's whole existence is also put in jeopardy when scientists uncover an alien virus in a mine on one of their colonies. The future, as ever, is an inevitably grim place in which to reside.

Virus attacks!

This latest virus invades the artificial brain inside the robots and causes them to turn against their masters and attack. And guess whose job it is to make sure the virus doesn't get back to Earth? Yes, indeed, it's another dirty job and you've got to do it again. There are only two ways to stop the robots: use the antidote and control them or

blast them into smithereens. And we know which we prefer.

The action is spread over 16 levels, culminating in a fight with a huge alien boss, and although the action appears essentially the same throughout the game, each level is quite different from the others. The first levels tend to be in enclosed environments but as the action progresses, the levels then spread as far as an Earth City, a hospital and an asteroid.

During the game you are able to take over the robots (nine in all) and use their exo-skeleton to guide your way through the levels. You start with little weapons strapped on to your back, and progress upwards to the huge behemoths, carrying more firepower than the whole of the US army. If you're shot while wearing a robot, you then revert back to normal, human state

Since we last saw the game MGM have included a new two-player, split-screen option which obviously adds dimension. This dual-screen version can be played in two ways, either co-operating or being competitive. As an addition, you can decide whether to turn your weaponry on to safe or 'friendly fire', where your weapons can hurt your opponent. It's a lot more fun but the games tend to finish a lot quicker.

On the surface of it, *MH* appears very much in the vein of *Reloaded*. A full review next month will confirm whether this is the case.



(1) Playing the two-player option in 'friendly fire' mode can be a lot of fun. (2) The levels are big, we rarely got far as the exits.

■ TITLER	Eidos Interactive	■ RELEASE DATE:	August	■ PLAYERS:	One or two
■ DEVELOPER	MGM Interactive	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE	Shoot 'em up



now you can play your premier team

Actua Soccer is universally recognised as the greatest football game ever. Here is just one of many testimonials:

*"The best footy game around.
It's almost like playing the real thing.
Beautiful."*

— Barry Davies, BBC Sports Personality

Now with Actua Soccer Club Edition, as well as all the action and authenticity of the original, you can play your favourite Premier League side with new live interactive commentary from football's finest, Barry Davies.



actua
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SERIES

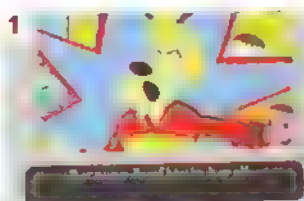


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PrePlay | PaRappa The Rapper

PA RAPPAPPA

If there was an contest for the **most original game** ever, *PaRappa The Rapper* would be right up there. It would also **get the vote** for being **one of the weirdest**



There are few games which are truly original — almost everything being a sequel to this, or a new version of that. So it was a wonderful surprise when we received *PaRappa The Rapper*, perhaps the most original title of the decade so far.

The game has been designed by a musician, and you play the eponymous hero, PaRappa, a mole-like character who must rap his way through six levels to win his girlfriend's heart. In each level you must learn a new skill through the power of rap to help you on your quest. It sounds easy, but just you wait until you try it.

PaRappa starts with a cut scene showing PaRappa and



[1] Joe Chin, owner of the world's biggest ego. [2] More phat vibes from the Rastafarian purple thing. [3] The Ragga Frog. Perhaps the best rapper in the game and certainly one of the funniest.



friends watching the latest instalment of *Jet Baby* at their local cinema. The night is going well until a gang of bunnies turn up at the burger bar and start hassling PaRappa's love, Sunny Funny. While everyone else sits there, too scared to move, PaRappa dreams of protecting his friends with some fancy martial art moves and decides to take Kung Fu lessons from the mighty Master Onion Head.

Training sessions

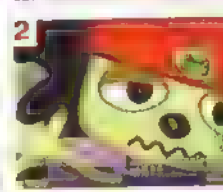
After a brief loading screen which tells you that PaRappa won't be a moment, you appear at the On on Dojo for your lessons. Here the game starts in earnest. A bar appears across the top of the screen showing you which buttons you should press and at what point. It all seems very easy but it does take a lot

of time to get the rhythm right and to remember when to kick, punch, block, and so on. Each level has four lessons which you must pass before you progress to the next level.

During your rapping sesh, a little gauge on the side of the screen charts your progress. You start out rated Good but this can soon change to Poor, or even



[1] Our hero makes the fateful mistake and enters the wrong toilet. [2] Nothing can hide his terrible embarrassment.



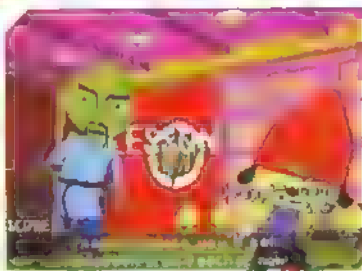
It was a wonderful surprise when we received *PaRappa The Rapper*, perhaps the most original title of the decade



■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ DEVELOPER:	Sony Japan	■ STYLE:	Rap sim
■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One



Your very first lesson. Here you meet the wonderfully-named Master Onion Head who teaches you the mystical art of Karate to the tune of a rap song. It sounds odd but works really well.



Awful, if you make a couple of mistakes. There is a counting for people who don't make any mistakes, but don't expect to see this very often.

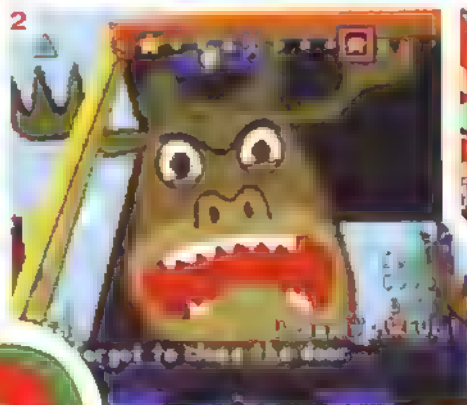
If you succeed in your Kung Fu lessons, you'll be allowed to progress to the second stage, having sorted out the bullies. Each stage is introduced by quite a long and, usually, funny scene explaining what you need to do. In the second stage, Parappa's embarrassed by Joe Chin and his

fancy car. He decides to learn to drive so that he can take Sunny to the beach for a romantic picnic and fend off the advances of Joe Chin, the town's rich boy and all-round show-off. This section finds you spinning around the city in a car taking a driving test. Instead of Master Onion Head for a tutor, you have a huge moose who sings nice upbeat, ditty. And so the story continues... but we'd rather not give too much away at this stage. Watch out for the

PaRappa has a certain charm, winning the attention of those who normally wouldn't so much as glance at a computer game

Ragga Frog, though

In keeping with the unusual gameplay and fantastic songs, the graphics are downright bizarre looking more like dancing cardboard cut-outs. Put it this way, can you think of another game where you are watched by little onions, clapping on your progress? Nope, neither could we. But *PaRappa* has a certain charm winning the attention of those who normally wouldn't so much as glance at a computer game. Just put *PaRappa* on your PlayStation and watch the queues form. And while it may not have as many levels as we would have liked, history is likely to prove it to be one of the best games the PlayStation ever saw.



(1) If you look carefully at the top of the screen you can see a bar full of symbols. This is your key to PaRappa's success. Follow these and you should be fine. (2) The driving test. This is one lady you don't want to make angry. (3) As you can see you play the game with either Japanese or English subtitles. (4) Doesn't the little chap look happy. (5) The Ragga Frog again.

The final countdown



In the final level to the game, you have to perform in front of a crowd in a shopping mall, while all your tutors watch on. This is a real test of your rapping prowess.



Each rap has a great tune which become embedded in your mind. You'll try not to sing along but it does prove very hard. Just like *Agadoo*, you'll be humming it for ages.



We'd love to tell you what happens if you complete this level, but we don't know ourselves - our staff writer didn't have the required rhythm to complete it. Arse.

PrePlay | Super Football Champ

Substitute

With the recent release of *ISS Pro*, gamers now expect a higher class of soccer game. One of the first contenders to go up against the God of Football games is Mindscape's *Super Football Champ*

Football games have never been more popular on the PlayStation; we seem to hear about a new one every month. Completing this month's tally are Mindscape, with their PlayStation version of Taito's arcade hit, *Super Football Champ*.

A first glance at the game reveals its apparent arcade lineage; the big polygon players strolling around the pitch, tackling one another with careless disregard and scoring freely.

To give the game a more international feel,

Taito have decided to use international teams and have tried to make each computer team reflect the skill level of their real-life counterparts. Amusingly enough, the



(1) As you can see, the grid does get in the way a bit. (2) The free-kick system uses a nice pointy thing to show direction and strength. (3) The games take place in some of the best stadiums on the PlayStation. (4) Morocco are about to beat the Brazilian keeper, when did that last happen?

programmers have made the England team particularly useless, while other teams such as Switzerland and Denmark are very strong indeed. We recommend you start playing as Germany or Brazil when you first play *SFC*, otherwise you'll get a pasting. The games we played nearly always ended with huge scores like 9-7 or 10-1.

The controls will be fairly familiar to anyone who's played an arcade footie game, with moves like one-twos, long balls,



A first glance at *Super Football Champ* reveals its apparent arcade lineage...

Pre-match entertainment

Intro



The intro shows you the Ace players in action. Some are great defenders, and some are the world's best strikers. This makes for a great, little intro.

■ PUBLISHER:	Mindscape	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ DEVELOPER:	Taito	■ STYLE:	Arcade football
■ RELEASE DATE:	September '97	■ PLAYERS:	One



1 Options galore. At the start of every game you can tweak your team for the best results. **2** The game's scorers.

slide tackles, and so on. An innovative idea is the Ace Player system. Instead of having a bunch of players with all the same strengths, you can choose one of eight players with varying pros and cons—although it must be said, it's rather unusual to be able to pick an Ace Player and have him play against his own national side.

SFC features four different modes of play. Anyone wanting a quick game should plump for the Exhibition game. You can play against the computer, against a friend or in co-operative mode with a friend against the computer.

For a more involved game, you can play a Worldwide Tournament where you play in group matches before going on to compete in the finals. As well as these, you can have a go with some penalty kicks or play in a District Tournament. This last option is rather strange: in order to qualify for the championship

you need to win all of the preliminary rounds. Quite why they've done it like this, we're not too sure.

Another arcade idea is the on-screen radar which lets you know where your men are. In principle this is a good idea but to be honest, it doesn't really work. It just gets in the way. Other options include the standard audio and controller configs as well as altering things like sudden death goals, offside and player names.

One of the more useful options looks like being the ability to turn down the commentary. Based on the early copy we played, the voiceover is probably the worst thing about the game. We've been told it should be changed by the time



it reaches the shops, but it almost seems a shame to lose such gems as, 'It's a headed shot', 'He's off his face' and 'A shot it's in...what a gel!' Almost, but not quite. But the crowd noise sounds wonderful—fans of Italian football should easily be able to make out the chants, with Fiorentina's 'Batigo' chant for Argentina's Gabriele Batistuta being the best.

In terms of gameplay, *SFC* plays like a dirty First Division encounter. When you don't have possession of the ball, each button on the controller performs a foul: be it a push, strong shoulder charger or a leg sweep

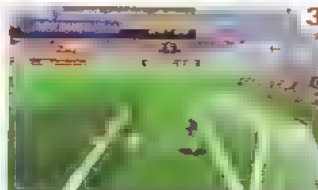
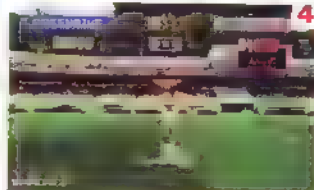
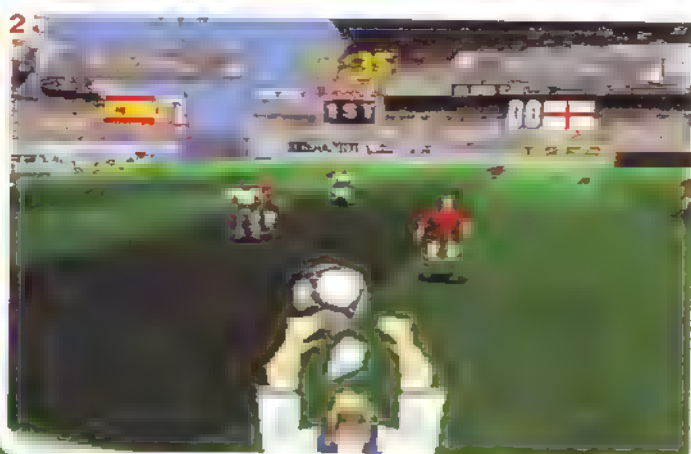


1 There are 30 teams to choose, ranging from World Champions Brazil to minnows like Korea and Japan. **2** The Ace players. You can choose one per match to help you win the game.

The referees are rather strict and you're quite likely to find your players being booked...

Unfortunately the referees are rather strict and you're quite likely to find your players being booked a few times if you use these fouls.

Playing *SFC*, it's clear Mindscape have got their work cut out to make it anything like *ISS Pro* but it should be easy enough to turn it into a decent game. A thorough PlayTest will let us know.



1 It's quite easy to score and surprisingly easy to save the shots, giving the decent penalty option. **2** A throw-in. **3** A goal kick. **4** The fouls are pretty good, with the players doing convincing impression of squealing pigs.

feedback

This month, motion sickness, Lara Croft in the nude, and the search for the ultimate soccer sim...

Hidden a gender

I write regarding the Readers Questionnaire contained within PSM19. I was previously under the impression that one of the major innovations of the PlayStation was its generic marketing - the games were designed to appeal to a new world of gamers, not just kids in iron Maiden T-shirts. More specifically, the advertising campaigns have been aimed at breaking down the male dominance of the videogames culture by showing women actually playing and enjoying the games. Many of the titles are designed to have a cross-gender appeal - *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* etc. This is all a positive step forward in the games industry.

So the idea is that the PlayStation isn't a male at just books. Why, then, is your questionnaire overtly biased against women? I refer to the 'lifestyle' magazines question. Of the eight magazines listed, six are specifically men's magazines, and *Sky* and *The Face* have some cross-gender appeal. Why are there no women's 'lifestyle' titles listed? Why no *Cosmopolitan* or *Mare*? You seem to be assuming that women won't complete your questionnaire.

Sort yourselves out. We've come a long way in the last few years.

Darren Coe,
darren@sar.dra.hmg.gb

We agree entirely with the sentiments of your letter, Darren, but unfortunately we have to take issue with the facts as you see them. Although much of the initial marketing was aimed at breaking down male dominance, it doesn't appear that it has worked - and the overwhelming majority of PlayStation gamers are still boys. And so it wasn't so much a case of assuming that women wouldn't reply to

our questionnaire, rather that many of them simply wouldn't get to read it. Research has shown that over 98 per cent of our readers are male, which is actually very similar to figures for men's mags. With this in mind, it seems only

reasonable to bias our questions toward them when trying to gain information about their buying habits. Perhaps a category for females would have been appropriate, but our research department obviously felt it wasn't necessary.

As for your thinking, however, we would have to say that you are being naive when it comes to many of your points. Advertising is as male or enticed as ever, with scantily clad girls and blood-soaked images constantly used. And with regard to *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*, have they really got cross-gender appeal, as you say? Surely the hype around Lara Croft has come from lusty young males rather than females who see her as some kind of role model?

What I really want

Having read your feature on the history of football games (PSM20), I have to disagree with some things that you stated. I have NEVER played a truly great football game yet. People think that *FIFA* was great, but it had way too many problems. You can't score from one-on-ones and you can ALWAYS score from the two 90° angles. Others said that *Sensible Soccer* was the great soccer game - in my opinion it was one of the worst! Players didn't properly control the ball, it had terrible graphics and sound - the list goes on. When are software companies going to realise what the public wants in a soccer game?

We want breathtaking graphics ▶

THE BEAUTIFUL ARTICLE

Just a line to say how much I enjoyed the feature on *The Beautiful Games* (PSM20). Being there, from Kevin Toms' *Football Manager* and the Commodore 64's *International Soccer* to *SWOS* and *ISS Pro* has been a brilliant experience. It brought back many memories, like there were only two guys ever that could even come close to beating me on *International Soccer*. In Northolt and Harrow my brother and I were the Juventus and Manchester United of the area. Nobody could beat us in the many tournaments we set up.

The 'You Get Nowt For Com ng Second' round up was excellent. Those games of *Wembley* we used to play were really exciting, and as for *Top Trumps*, we lived on them. As for my fingers, they still haven't recovered from those *Subbuteo* games. The chart you did was just right, but I can't help but feel sorry for *SWOS*. I like it, but for Juninho on May 17 at Wembley. They both provided so much entertainment and deserved a winner's medal for their efforts. Keep up the good work on a fine, entertaining and informative mag.

Before signing off, however, I do have a couple of questions. 1. In the past, I have looked for *Wembley*, the board game, and have been unable to find it. Can you please tell me where I can buy one?

2. Reading the comments from some of

the contributors to *The Beautiful Games*, many of them loved *SWOS*. It seems many PSM readers do, too, so could you please ask Sensible Software why they haven't started producing *SWOS* for the PlayStation yet?

Nana Penemo,
Middlesex

Thanks for your praise, Nana. Writing the feature provided us with a few nostalgic moments as well. We also have a soft spot for *SWOS*, and find it a winner was a hard decision, but the can only be one winner and for every Juninho there's a Zola. In the end we just couldn't top *ISS Pro*.

As for your questions, we bought our copy of *Wembley* from *Total Football*. And if you want to find out where they got their copy, simply write to *Total Football*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. They're very helpful lads and would love to hear from you.

On the subject of *Sensible Soccer*, we're always being asked about why *Sensible* have never released a version of the game on the PlayStation and be honest, we have no idea. Surely the game would sell well, and perhaps as the user base soars past the one-million mark, they may be tempted now, though it just isn't going to happen, we're afraid.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TETSUO AND BODYHAMMER

"MORE POWER, ANGER AND TRUTH
THAN RAGING BULL...DYNAMIC..." **EMPIRE**

"OUTSTANDING, SUPERB..." **LOADED**



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Letters

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► (*Actua* came close in this department) We want realistic commentary and real stick-looking players (*ISS Pro*, I believe has these). We want real names at club and international levels and goalkeepers that actually have positioning skills (not like *Actua* or *FIFA* where they just follow the ball, and subsequently you get open goals). We want physical players (ie, if the ball hits them, it rebounds rather than going through them). We want real defences (not defences like *FIFA* and *Actua* where they leave you to happily run through the middle). We want consistent refs and gameplay (*Actua* mastered this, sort of). Surely this isn't too much to ask?

Andrew Jobes,
AJobes@Dircon.co.uk

Not too much to ask? You want the moon on a stick. Presumably this football game will only cost a fiver and come with a free Bovril to have at half-time?

We agree that with the individual elements present in the various football games to date, you should be able to come up with a complete game which satisfies everyone. But perhaps it's your early comments which suggest that this will never be possible. No sooner had somebody begged us to help get *Sensible Soccer* released, than you come along saying how bad it was. And therein, perhaps, lies a problem - you can please some of the people all of the time, etc. Football games can only get better in the future, but people will always have different opinions about what makes them great. *ISS Pro* is as good as it gets, as far as we're concerned, but we've had letters from some people saying that they aren't keen. We're looking forward to *Actua Soccer 2* and Ocean's *UEFA Soccer* to see if they can get it right.

Lapping it up

Agreed, the consumption of alcohol transforms the poorest pool player into a potting machine, but I can't see that this point really warrants a six-page spread on how drinking can improve your game playing skills (*Drinking Games*, *PSM20*). I have no idea of the average age of your readership, but I'd hazard a guess that some of them, maybe even the majority are not of the legal drinking age yet.

You must realise that to show five trendy twenty-somethings drinking alcohol will have some kind of influence on younger people who are forming their opinions on life? I can't imagine you would have a spread on the best games to play when smoking. The article was cheap and only mildly funny. The link between alcohol and driving is pretty shameful, too, don't you think?

You're a bunch of misguided idiots to print something like that feature. You have a responsibility. Whoever came up with it obviously wants a job with *Loaded*. Grow up, and stick to reviewing games.

Giles Evans (22),
Giles@geevans.demon.co.uk

For a start, you might be interested to know that the average age of our readers is 24, with over 90 per cent of them being between 18 and 34. Therefore the vast

LARA NONSENSE

Recently, I thought I'd spend a nice day surfing the net. When I found a hidden file I thought it'd be a good idea to explore it, so I did. I found several pictures of the Lara Croft Nude Raider and thought it was terrible. I explored the rest of the hidden file and went to the cheats section, in which I found a cheat to make Lara Croft nude. I want to know if Eidos and Core made the nude cheat code or is it just someone who wants to mess up everyone's game console? Because you have to tap in the first verse of *Wannabe* by the Spice Girls, while your controller is in port 2. Does this cheat work?

Jonathan Bolster (10)
Derry, N Ireland

Just accidentally stumbled across those Nude Raider shots, eh, Jonathan? Didn't actually go looking for them or anything? No, of course not. We've also visited the Nude Raider site and for others like Jonathan who might go for a relaxing day surfing, the address is <http://www.nucore.com/~dss97/reviews2.html>. As for the cheat, though, we're afraid it's all just a Lara, Lara nonsense.

Completely made up. If you think about it, the *Wannabe* song was released well after *Tomb Raider* had become famous and no way could a cheat that elaborate be worked into a game. Sorry to disappoint you.



Motion sickness

Having owned various consoles over the years and now having owned my PlayStation for a year, I was wondering why Sony's console seems to be the only one which causes me to have motion sickness and dizziness on particular games. Unfortunately these include the into-the-screen 3D games such as *Disruptor*, *Doom*, *Kingsfield* and *Heken*. After only a few minutes play I feel disorientated and nauseous and need to stop playing. Do any other PlayStation owners suffer from this? I can only presume that the speed of the game engine is the cause, as I can play games such as *Excalibur 2555AD*, *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* with no side effects whatsoever, it would be interesting if the cause of this 'ailment' could be discovered, as sufferers could be missing out on a few choice games.

Sarah Williams,
North Yorkshire

It's an interesting problem, and one that we'll be looking into in a more technical manner shortly, but rest assured, you're not alone in this matter. Many of the PSM team have suffered from motion sickness either when playing into-the-screen *Doom*-style games, or many of the racing games. Our feeling is that it's the fast engine that you suggested and the fact that your brain doesn't reconcile this movement with the horizon quickly enough. It's a problem that we may put to the test with a number of guinea pigs, so feel free

to contact us if you want to be put to the test. Certainly, though, there's a vested interest from the whole of the PSM team who have suffered badly from reviewing fast moving games early in the morning with a stonking hangover.

Listing badly

Having just read your reply to David Bower's letter in issue 20's Q&A, I'd just like to say 'Don't do it!'. These listings, or datablasts are a huge waste of space. I'd rather see the extra pages being devoted to extra features, or a larger news section. Anything would be preferable to a datablast. Let's face it, 99 per cent of readers would rarely ever look at it. If you must run one, however, then present it as a booklet every other issue - it would be much less intrusive and won't waste valuable space.

Chris Clarke,
Somerset

So readers, what do you reckon? On the one hand such listings can provide essential buying information on the 200+ games available on the PlayStation. This is invaluable for new owners. But the counter argument is that for those who have been with us from the start, there's no need for such a section and you're likely to skip past it every time. Let us know what you think on the subject and tell us exactly what you'd like to see in it. After all, it's your magazine.

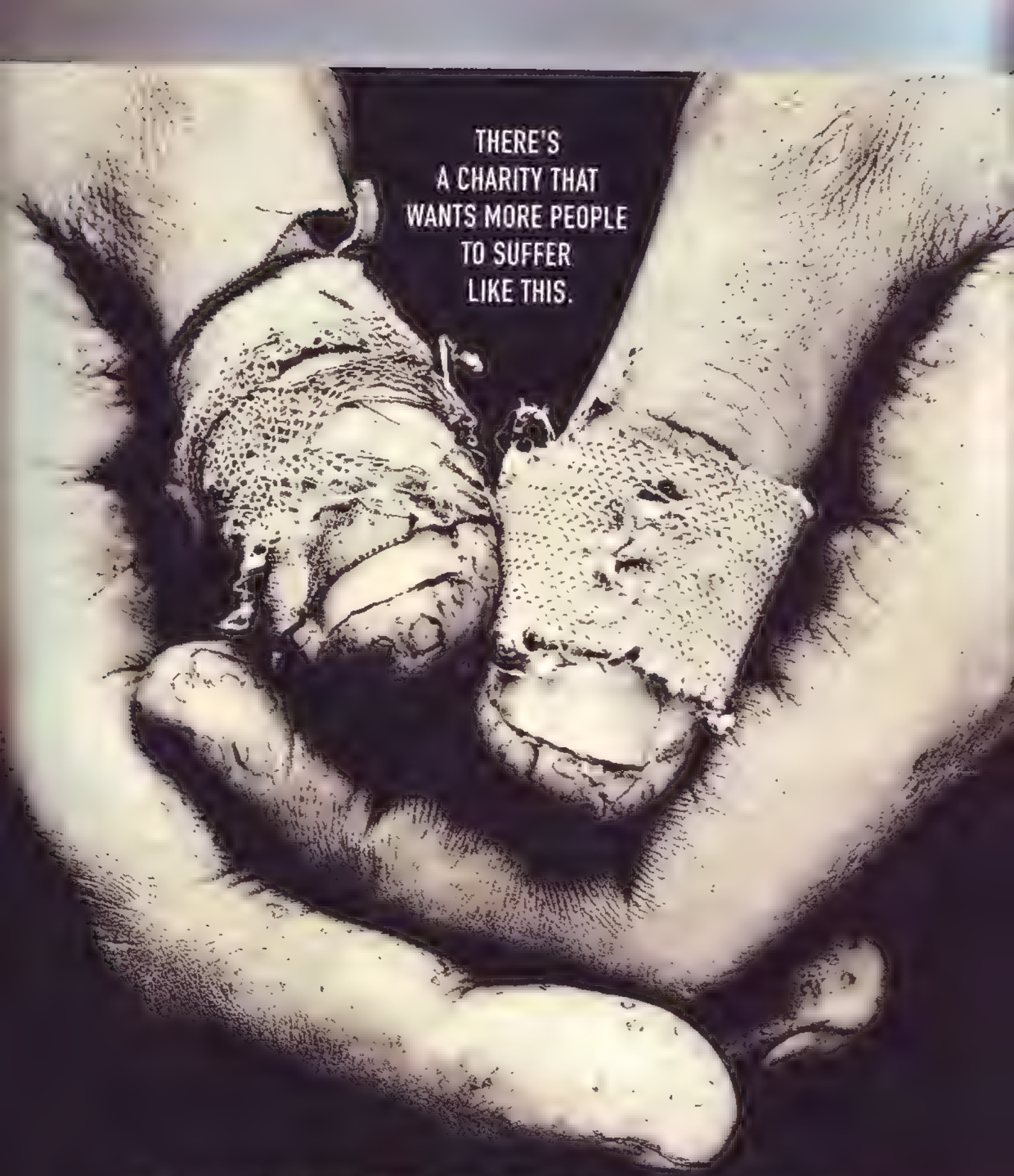
Poor show

After reading your review of *Porsche Challenge* I decided to rent it to see what all the fuss was about. It's utter cack! Excellent graphics, non-existent game play. I mean trying to control the car is one thing, but having to finish the race first position to get to the next track is something else! At least in *DD2* it doesn't matter where you finish, plus the fact it oozes playability as well as graphics. I'm just glad that I didn't waste £35 on this load of old tat. Shame on you, Sony. Let's just hope that *Rage Racer* has something to offer us gamersayers.

G Gardner,
Derry, N Ireland

Yet more evidence that you can't please all of the people all of the time. When we read Q&A you'll see that another reader agrees totally with our review. We're enjoying *Porsche Challenge*, but only we'd played it for some considerable time. Initially we were unconvinced, the longer we played it, the more it won us. With this in mind, it may well be that renting the game once may not have been long enough to really get to grips with the gameplay.

This certainly won't be the case with *Rage Racer*. We fell in love with it as we started playing and that love affair's yet to end (as you can see in our review on p.96).



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WANTS MORE PEOPLE
TO SUFFER
LIKE THIS.

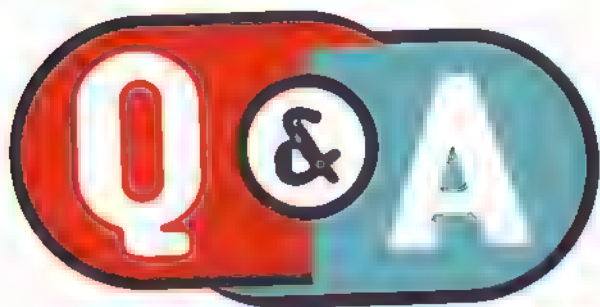
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YES, YOUR THUMBS WILL HURT, YOUR BRAIN WILL HURT, BUT YOUR SOUL WILL BE PURE. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE PRINCE'S TRUST.



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Letters

Q&A, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



1 Do you know what's happening with Builfrog? I've heard rumours about them pulling out of console development to concentrate on PC games. Apparently they've canned all projects on the Saturn but what about the PlayStation? I've been waiting for *Syndicate Wars* for over a year and you said in PSM19 that it's set for a release in June, but I've heard that the console won't get finished.

2 Another game I've been waiting for is *Discworld 2*. Looking back over previous issues, the last time you mentioned the game was in PSM9 where you said it was set for a winter release and that you'd have a preview in the near future. And further updates?

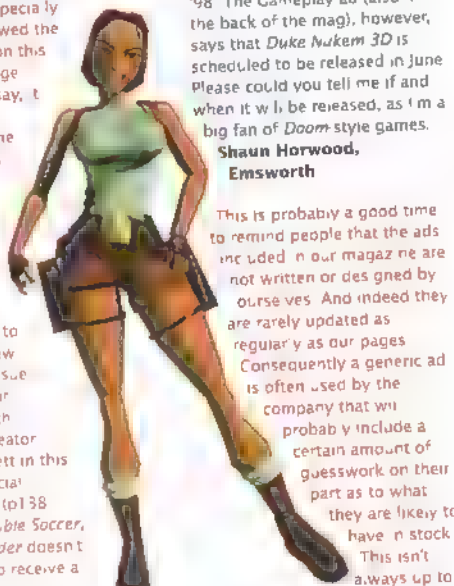
3 I know that quite a few people have been asking about a conversion of the superb *Sensible Soccer* but what about *Cannon Fodder*? Are Sensible Software going to do anything?

Moose

1 Most of these rumours seem way off the mark, Moose. Certainly there's no truth in the rumour that *Syndicate Wars* will not be completed on the PlayStation. Especially as we've reviewed the finished version on this month (see page 102). As you say, it should be released in June.

2 Good news on the *Discworld* front as well. The game finally looks like it's ready and we hope to have a preview in the next issue. Check out our interview with *Discworld* creator Terry Pratchett in this month's Official PlayStation Magazine.

3 Like *Sensible Soccer*, *Cannon Fodder* doesn't look likely to receive a release on the



PlayStation. But, as ever, we'll be reminding Sensible of the need to get on with something on the PlayStation.

1 In *Porsche Challenge*, is there an in-car view?

2 I already own *Tekken*. Should I buy *Soul Blade* or wait for *Tekken 3*?

3 Would *ISS Pro* be suitable for people new to 3D football games?

Brendan Sherwood, Brighton

1 PC has no in-car view, we're afraid, but plenty of others have. Check out our reviews of two superlative racers, *V-Rally* (p92) and *Rage Racer* (p96).

2 *Soul Blade* is a great game but we'd suggest waiting for *Tekken 3*, which is likely to be superb.

3 *ISS Pro* is suitable for anyone. Its learning curve is designed to suit experienced gamers and novices alike. Buy it now.

I've recently spoken to CD Direct (advertised in the back of the mag) and they told me that *Duke Nukem 3D* isn't to be released until September or even January '98. The Gameplay ad, also in the back of the mag, however, says that *Duke Nukem 3D* is scheduled to be released in June. Please could you tell me if and when it will be released, as I'm a big fan of *Doom*-style games.

Shaun Horwood, Emsworth

This is probably a good time to remind people that the ads included in our magazine are not written or designed by ourselves. And indeed they are rarely updated as regularly as our pages. Consequently a generic ad is often used by the company that will probably include a certain amount of guesswork on their part as to what they are likely to have in stock. This isn't always up to

date, and the best bet is to phone the individual company to find out exactly what they do have in for sale.

1 I'm a PlayStation enthusiast and also a very keen angler. Do you know of any fishing games that are available for the PlayStation? If there aren't any, why not? I'm sure they'd be popular.

2 Also what, in your opinion, is the best football management game at the moment?

Tim Rose, Essex

1 Actually bass fishing games are very big in the States but unfortunately they don't seem to have caught on over here. There are rumours that THQ may be bringing one over for a PAL conversion, but that isn't concrete yet. The SNES fishing games were great fun, so hopefully something will be landed by the PlayStation.

2 At the moment the choice is fairly poor for PlayStation football management sims, but this autumn Cremlin release *Premier Manager '97* which is already looking superb.

Is there going to be a follow-up to *Soviet Strike*?

William Trent, Halifax

Yes, it's called *Nuclear Strike* and it's in this month's *Prima Screen*.

1 In *ISS Pro* why have they changed the names - like Roberto Baggio is called Rigg?

2 Any news on *Tomb Raider 2*?

3 Are there any new football simulations lined up for 1997?

4 I know they're modelled on David Ginola, but why are the keepers so rubbish in *FIFA '97*?

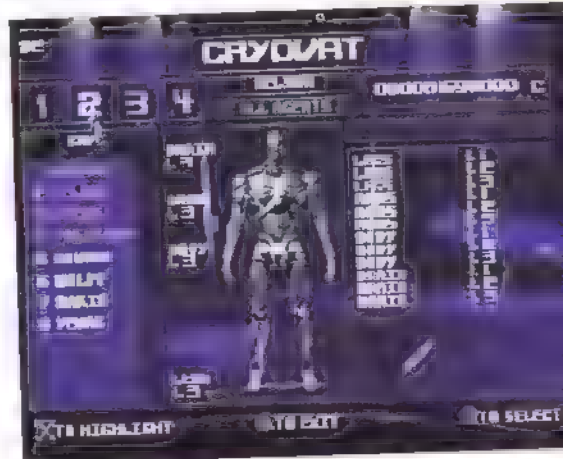
5 I've a rumour that there's a *Space Jam* game out. Is it true and if so, is the game any good?

Gary Westwood, Northumberland

1 You need a licence to be able to use real names and unfortunately Konami haven't got that licence. So they revert to 'comedy' names.

2 There is, indeed, and it looks splendid. We have a report on the game in *Prima Screen* p8 and a diary of the game's development will follow, leading up to an exclusive review and playable demo later in the year.

3 In addition to the recent batch of football games including *ISS Pro* and *Soccer '97*, there are at least two other games planned for later in the year. Cremlin have high hopes for



For those that have been patiently awaiting *Syndicate Wars* the full version is given a thorough PlayTesting on page 102.

Actual Soccer 2, while Ocean are starting to make big noises about their UEFA soccer game.

4 Actually the goalkeepers aren't modelled on David Ginola, so you can't blame him. But yeah, you'd imagine they were modelled on David James.

After reading that there's a sequel to *F1* in the offing (Q&A PSM19), I've recently heard that Eidos are making a version of the game which is being made in France. This puts me off as I've also heard that they're using 1995 season cars and

In *Prima Screen* you'll find a game called *Croc* which is as close to *Mario 64* on PlayStation as we've seen yet...

wouldn't you?

5 There is a *Space Jam* game and it seems to have sneaked past us. Rest assured, a review will follow shortly.

1 Any news on *Crash 2*?

2 Are there any games on the release schedule to compete with *Mario 64*?

3 When will *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* be released for the PlayStation?

Andrew Taylor, Whitton

1 As above, details of *Crash 2* are included in this month's *Prima Screen*. There are also details of some *Crash* merchandise now available which are included on the World of PlayStation pages (p12/13).

2 This is becoming like a stuck record, but if you turn to *Prima Screen*, you'll find a game called *Croc* which is as close to *Mario 64* on the PlayStation as we've seen yet.

3 *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* isn't due out until next year. But, rest assured, it isn't an April Fool's joke, as some of you suggested. Accion will be releasing a PlayStation version.

information. Will Psygnosis be making a sequel using their style and quality? And will they use the '97 cars and new statistics?

Matthew Booth, mathiew@lbn.co.uk

There are two *F1* games coming out this year. One is the Eidos game, you mention, which has indeed got old stats. Recently though, Psygnosis have secured the rights to the 1997 data, so their sequel, set for release this coming November, will include all the latest cars and drivers. It will also update the brilliant gameplay that made original such a hit. See page 102.

Why might *FFVII* not get released in the UK?

Mark Darby, Ireland

It was thought that the nature of the gameplay and the dialogue not suitable for a British audience, but the mass media surrounding the game has it essential that the game be released in the UK and a US release. And this should happen late this year.

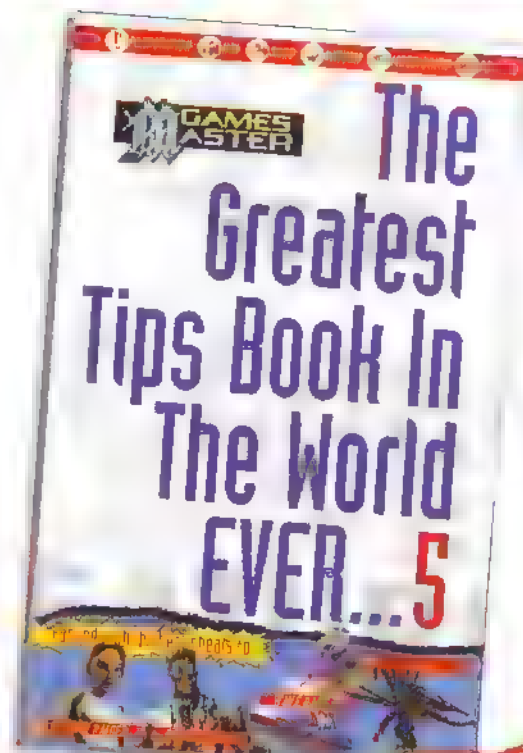
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Vox pop **The readers' vote**

the
readers'
top

5



In *PSM17*, we asked a bunch of freebie-scrounging, techno-babbling, suit-wearing, slackers – to which we very loosely affixed the collective term ‘industry experts’ – for their opinions on the top 50 PlayStation games of all time. But, hey, what do they know? No doubt the last time they spent hard currency on a game, we were probably under the last Labour government. What really counts is what the buying public think.

PlayStation games

What readers of this magazine think. In other words, what you think. And what follows is how you – in your thousands – voted. Here, then, is the first ever *Official UK PlayStation Magazine's Readers' Top 50...*

Vox pop The readers' vote

50 Olympic Soccer

PSM8 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
Never a licence to die for, but an intelligent learning curve, accessible controls, and realistic gameplay make this a surprisingly habit-forming football simulation.

49 X-COM: Terror From The Deep

PSM14 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
Another episode of 'hunt the alien'. You play a secret agent in charge of fighting off an invasion of underwater aliens. Very similar to the original but entertaining nevertheless.

48 Monster Trucks

PSM17 6/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
A basic 4x4 truck racing game. Either race round a track or take turns crushing cars in an arena. You've seen it all before, and better.

47 Jumping Flash

PSM1 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 41
This 3D platformer is the only one of its kind on the market. You play a robotic rabbit, jumping around sky islands in search of magic carrots with which to defeat the evil Baron A.Oha.

46 Sampras Extreme Tennis

PSM9 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
A competent, playable tennis game though somewhat lacking in the 'wow' factor. You'll get hours of gameplay, particularly with the two-player option.

45 Street Fighter Alpha

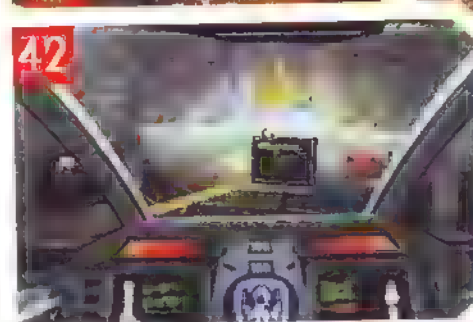
PSM5 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
Not quite as good as the sequel but still the second best 2D beat 'em up out there. This won't win new fans to the series but old fans will adore it.

44 ISS Deluxe

PSM5 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 30
We can't quite understand the idea behind releasing this and *ISS Pro* within such a short space of time. Although this is a great game, it's only appeal to die-hard fans of the SNES version.



43 Sim City 2000

PSM11 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
First released on the Amiga, *Sim City* puts you in the role of town planner, aiming to build the perfect city. But then you probably know this already.

42 Descent

PSM4 8/10

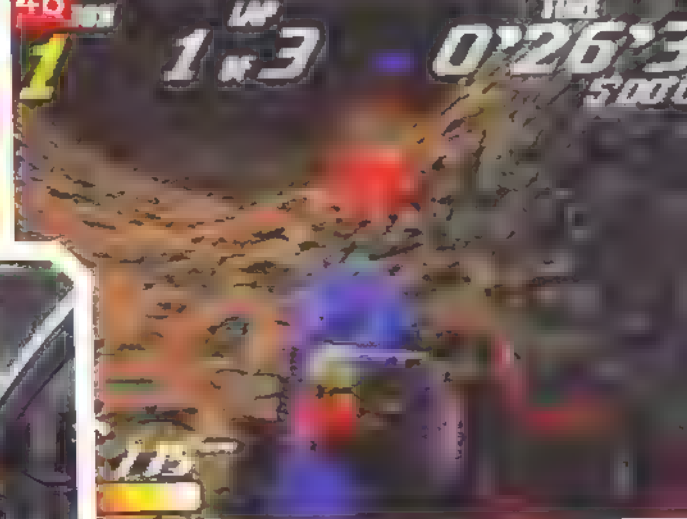
Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
Enter the mine, rescue the soldiers while fighting off a horde of nasties. An interesting, if a little confusing, departure from the *Doom* game. Worth a look.

41 Star Gladiator

PSM14 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 27
Easy enough to get into, this sickly presented beat 'em up has enough combos and subtle tactics to test the skills and memory of the most hardened of 3D fighting experts.

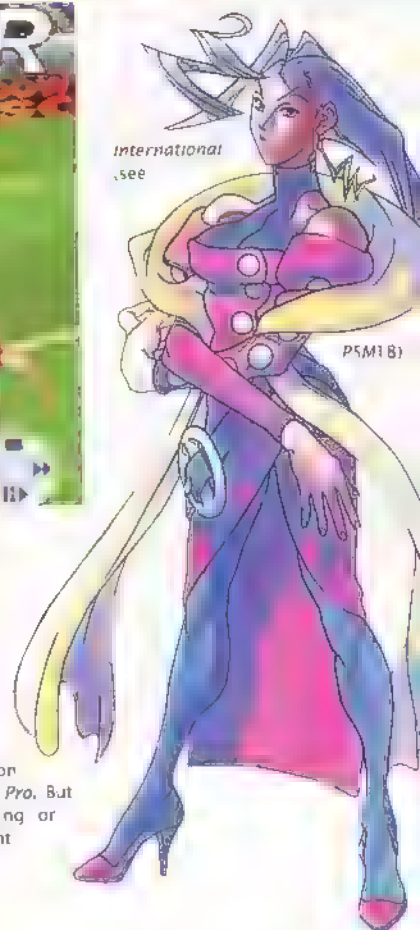
48



40 Adidas Power Soccer

PSM6 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a
An entertaining soccer sim with some outrageous dirty assaults available in Arcade mode. Not as good as *Actua Soccer* - though infinitely more fun - and no competition for the best football game *ISS Pro*. But at £20 this is still worth buying or you could check out its recent sequel, *Adidas Power Soccer*.



Fighting

There was no competition here. *Tekken 2* garnered twice as many votes as the others put together, but it was good to see that not all of the votes were for kickboxing style games - quite a few elected the vastly underrated boxing sim, *Victory Boxing*.

Victory Boxing Street Fighter

39 Warhammer

PSM12 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 29

Based on the amazingly popular tabletop game, *Warhammer* is a great example of a real-time 3D battle simulation. Roleplayers will adore this game.

38 Madden '97

PSM11 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

Electronic Arts have always had a good record when it comes to American sports games, so it was no surprise when *Madden '97* turned out to be the best US football game on the market.

37 Alien Trilogy

PSM5 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 19

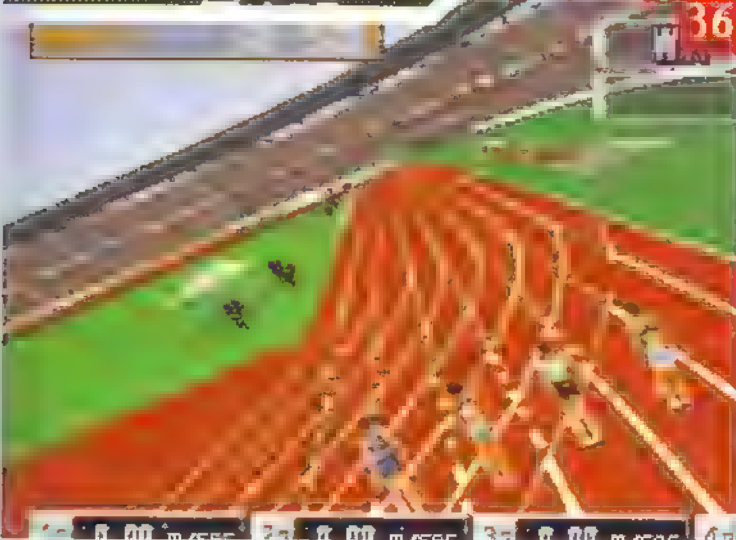
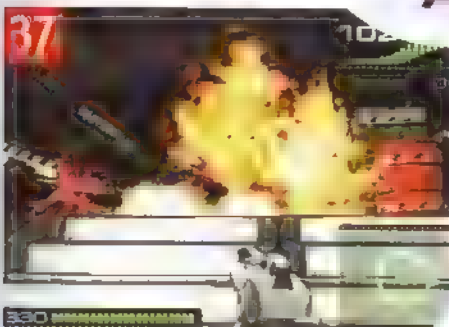
When it comes to games, film tie-ins tend to be awful. But not this one. You wander through an army base, *Doom*-style, killing the aliens before they kill all the civilians.

36 Int'l Track & Field

PSM8 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 12

It's just like Daley Thompson's Decathlon with polygons - the same button-smacking style with fantastic multi-player appeal. Just don't forget the handcream.



35 Cool Boarders

PSM6 6/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

A hugely successful snowboarding game. Four tracks, loads of music and an awful American voiceover shouting 'Awesome!' and 'Radical!' every five seconds. Probably a good rental game.

34 NHL '97

PSM16 6/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 49

The best ice hockey game to date presented with all the usual EA finesse. Gorgeous graphics, great gameplay and some nice dirty moves.

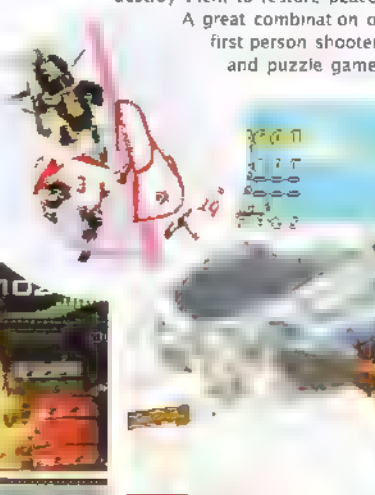
33 Exhumed

PSM18 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

An epic adventure, set in ancient Egypt. The Valley of Karnak has been besieged by an evil alien force, the Kilmaat, and it's your job to seek and destroy them to restore peace.

A great combination of first person shooter and puzzle game.



32 Disruptor

PSM13 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 38

Great graphics and superb gameplay make for an underestimated *Doom*-style game. It's one of the hardest in its genre, with each level interspersed with top-quality FMV explaining what you have to do to complete it.

31 Broken Sword

PSM11 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 48

One of the most successful point-and-click adventures on the PlayStation.



We still gets plenty of calls asking for trips on this game, even from as far as New Zealand. We were surprised by its placing, though - 31st?

30 Discworld

PSM17 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

If you have enough patience to cope with a point-and-click adventure and enjoy Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* books, you may find *Discworld* to your taste. Alas, we didn't. The game is too slow and, it must be said, dull.



A few years ago the only shoot 'em ups you could get were the sideways scrolling blasters where you shot everything which foolishly flew into your path. This all changed following the success of the PlayStation *Doom* - suddenly every blaster had to be first-person. This was no bad thing as some of the best games on the market were based on this idea.



29 Tekken

PSM2 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

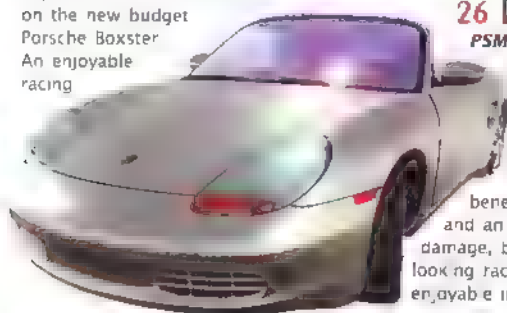
At the time there was nothing to come close to this 3D polygon beat 'em up. Even now it's one of the finest of its genre, offering immense depth and playability. A perfect Platinum title

28 Porsche Challenge

PSM20 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

Top-of-the-charts racer based on the new budget Porsche Boxster. An enjoyable racing



game with a great split screen option

27 Soviet Strike

PSM13 7/10

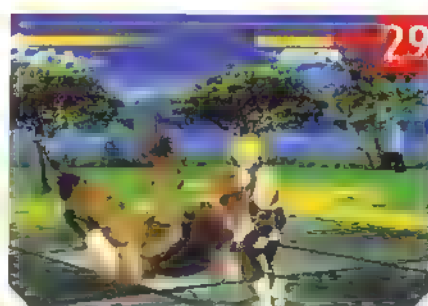
Industry Top 50 placing - 15

The follow-up to EA's hit 16-bit *Strike* series. A former Soviet general has decided to return Russia to the bad old days of communism. To foil his plot you must pilot your helicopter through five furious levels and shoot your way to victory

26 Destruction Derby

PSM1 7/10 Industry Top 50 placing - 39

Take a variety of cars for a spin around some nasty, narrow tracks, walloping other motors in the process. It could benefit from better car control and an option to turn off the damage, but this is a splendid looking racing game which is enjoyable in spite of its faults



In one of the most hard fought categories, we weren't surprised to find *Actua Soccer* hitting the top, although we still can't work out why so many people bought the awful *FIFA '97*. Deservedly making the top three is *Total NBA '96*, a wonderful basketball sim only beaten in quality by its recent sequel

ACTUA SOCCER, FIFA '97, Total NBA '96

25 Wipeout

PSM1 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 44

Its incredible graphics and gameplay set the PlayStation on fire when it was released. Zoom along the tracks in a floating ship at a 8'zillion miles an hour, trying to blast your rivals out of the way. A PlayStation classic.

24 Total NBA '96

PSM3 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 13

If there's one thing you'll remember about this game, it must be the squeaky shoes running about the shiny, reflective court. It ought to be cheap now that the sequel's out, and it's still rated our favourite sports game to date

23 Street Fighter Alpha 2

PSM13 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 42

SFA2 is still one of the best fighting games to date, and perhaps the best

sprite-based game - certainly a far better bet than *Darkstalkers*. But don't get games like this look dated now?

22 Tempest X

PSM15 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

'One of the most sense-dazzling thrillers that you'll ever get from a videogames machine', we said. Fly down the periphery of a tunnel, avoiding or shooting aliens as the slide their way to you. Now a budget title, too



21 FIFA '97

PSM15 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 34

Why on why is this up there with games like *Final Doom* and *Tempest X*? Although this is an improvement on FIFA '96, it's poor when compared to games like *ISS Pro* and *Actua Club Edition*. You should all be ashamed of yourselves for putting up with such mediocrity.

20 Final Doom

PSM13 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 48

'You never can get enough of this brilliant game', we said. 'Thirty more spine-chilling, mind-jarring levels that challenge you to the maximum' if you thought that the original was too hard, don't go anywhere near this beast. It'll have you crying for weeks if, on the other hand, you reckon you're a master at *Doom*, pack up your gun and get ready for action.

19 Need For Speed

PSM5 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 21

An immensely enjoyable racer - the physics of the car feel real, all of the

specs are right and, as its name suggests, it certainly has speed. Unfortunately the realism probably alienated a lot of consumers ready to shell out cash for the latest arcade-style racing game. Fools. Those that purchased it obviously feel it was money well spent. Oh, and don't forget the fun two-player option.

18 Victory Boxing

PSM13 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 35

We'll leave the comments to one of our readers, who said, 'Victory Boxing is the sort of cultured fighting game which, once you've got to grips with the controls, has incredible depth - anyone who disagrees can meet me outside in five minutes'. Obviously he liked it. And judging by its top 20 spot, he wasn't alone. A cultured game and a nice change from the usual Eastern-bas to fighting games.

17 X-COM: Enemy Unknown

PSM1 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

Hunt aliens, find 'em, kill 'em, then experiment on them. *X-COM* draws you in and keeps you hooked. The game is split into two parts - the



management section and the battle section - and both are equally absorbing. This title was possibly the biggest surprise of the whole 50 when it cropped up at number 17, but a pleasant surprise nonetheless. Fans of *X-COM* should get hold of the latest *X-COM: Terror from the Deep* - it's more of the same, but even harder.

16 Bust A Move 2

PSM8 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 6

Place two balls of the same colour next to one another to pop them. It sounds simple but it isn't. If you play the game for a few minutes, you'll end up playing it for hours - it's one of those genuinely addictive games. A

fantastic puzzle game, available for a cheap price, and still it only comes sixteenth. Another result which had us puzzled.

15 Ridge Racer

PSM1 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 7

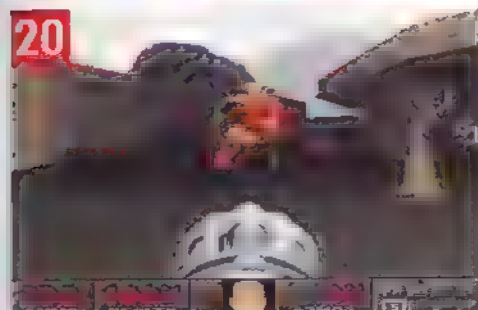
Are you crazy? Only fifteenth for the wonderful *Ridge*? Okay, so there are lots of newer racing games but surely none match the grace and genius of Namco's first offering for the PlayStation. There's something special about the original track, the unforgiving corners, the slick cars and the long straights. You should go down to your local games shop, get hold of the ludicrously cheap Platinum version and start playing. Now.

14 Pandemonium

PSM14 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 22

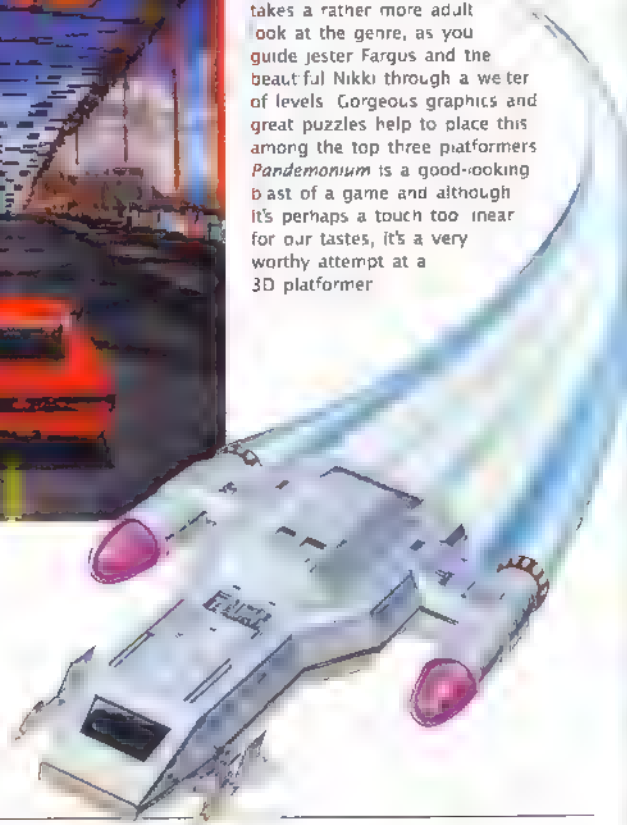
The other big platform game for the PlayStation. This one takes a rather more adult look at the genre, as you guide jester Fergus and the beautiful Nikki through a welter of levels. Gorgeous graphics and great puzzles help to place this among the top three platformers. *Pandemonium* is a good-looking beast of a game and although it's perhaps a touch too linear for our tastes, it's a very worthy attempt at a 3D platformer.



Strategy

This genre is a perfect example of the old and the new. *Command & Conquer* and *Warhammer* are great examples of the new style of real-time 3D games which are bound to sweep the market over the next year. The other game, *X-COM*, is very much an old-style, turn-based game. All these games should come with warnings - they are easy to play, but incredibly addictive.

Command & Conquer, X-COM: Enemy Unknown, Warhammer



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The readers' vote Vox pop



13 Crash Bandicoot

PSM10 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 17

Whatever people said about this beautiful 3D platformer, and there've been a lot of mixed comments, there can be no disputing the quality of the graphics. They're stunning. The gameplay had us playing for quite a while until we finally cracked it. If you like your platform games hard and oft-frustrating, then take a gander at *Crash*. It might look like it's designed for kiddies, but don't be fooled. Only serious gamers need apply.

12 Worms

PSM2 7/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 16

Perhaps the best way to describe *Worms* is a strange mix of *Lemmings* and *Doom*. We said in our review 'Although visually off-putting, the intense gameplay compensates for the lack of polygons. But don't expect to be playing this two months down the line'. Oops, well that's what we thought at the time - it looks like you're still playing it, judging by the number of people who voted for this one.

11 Ridge Racer Revolution

PSM6 8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

Just like the original but with new tracks, a link-up mode and a rear-view

mirror. *RRR* is slightly harder than its predecessor, but it still remains one of the best racers on the console market. And with all the extra features, you're bound to be playing this for a long time to come.

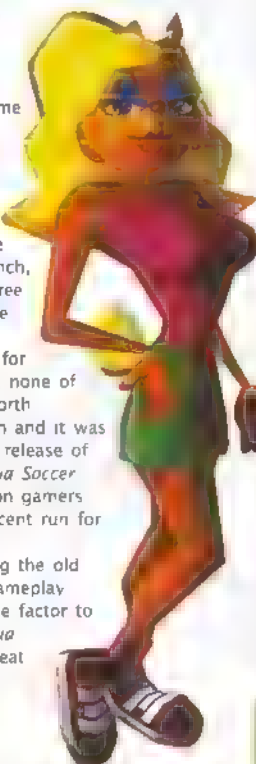
10 Actua Soccer

PSM3 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 11

Perhaps the most over-developed game style of the PlayStation is the football game. Within a couple of months of the machine's launch, there were three different football titles. But unfortunately for gamers, none of these were worth bothering with and it was only with the release of Grem's *Actua Soccer* that PlayStation gamers received a decent run for their money.

Dispatching the old theory that gameplay was an inverse factor to graphics, *Actua* manages a great



combination of both of them. *Actua* allows you to pit your wits against the world's finest players while listening to the aural delights of Barry Davies. It's a testament to the game that it still remains the most popular football game. 'The only truly complete football game for the PlayStation', according to one of our readers.

9 Doom

PSM2 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 14

Most computer-game genres can be traced to just one game, way back in the annals of computer history - a platform games spawned from the brilliant *Manic Miner*, for example. This can be applied to *Doom*, spawning all the first person shooters. Okay, so the first game was *Wolfenstein 3D*, or possibly the ZX81 game *3D Monster Maze*, but it was *Doom* which really brought the genre to everyone's attention and refined the genre. There was something about the combination of blood and battles which appealed to almost everyone. Add to this the multi-player option and *Doom* was given immediate entry into the gaming hall of fame.

8 Command & Conquer

PSM15 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 10

There was a time when wargames were the sole domain of black T-shirt, tight trouser-wearing teenagers who liked nothing better than a good hex turn-based system. Fortunately games like *Dune 2* and *Command & Conquer* have consigned these games to history. Now for a wargame to survive, it must be in 3D real-time at the very least. You play either the terrorist NODs or the GDI forces in their battle for world

domination. It only takes a few minutes to get used to the control system and you'll soon be ready to take on the world. This isn't an easy game, by any means, but it's one that many of our readers have found very rewarding. Perhaps David Swanston summed it up best as, 'the world's finest strategy game'. He wasn't wrong. For an all-out war sim, C&C has no contenders. Yet.

7 Die Hard Trilogy

PSM10

8/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 8

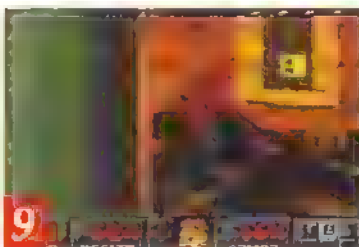
When it comes to value for money, this game ranks right up there with the PlayStation itself. Based on the successful film trilogy, you can play Bruce in any of his film incarnations. The best level, Die Harder, finally gives PlayStation owners a proper *Virtua Cop*-style shoot 'em up. The other two games see you chase a bomb around the streets of New York and release hostages from the Nakatomi Plaza. The blood count might not be to everyone's taste but if you can cope with this and have a decent fighting in, then you'll have a great evening's entertainment.

6 Destruction Derby 2

PSM13 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - n/a

Let's be honest, *Destruction Derby* wasn't brilliant. It might have sold by the bucket load and, yes, the bowl games were great fun but the tracks lacked width. Fortunately, when Reflections sat down to work on *DD2* they spent a lot of time working on these faults and turned out a fantastic game. It might not have the Replay mode we talked about in our review but it does have four great deathbows and some much improved and widened courses. Perhaps a surprisingly high pacing but undoubtedly deserving of it.



Unlike other categories, the PlayStation is rather short of decent platform games. Okay, there are a lot of games, but would you really describe games like *Lomax* and *Earthworm Jim 2* as greats? All three of the games listed below would be a good addition to gamer's collection.



5 Formula 1

PSM11 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 3

Ever since the days of *Revs* and *Chequered Flag*, Grand Prix sims have been amazingly popular, so it was no surprise when the officially-licensed game was voted fifth in our readers survey. When it finally arrived, we reckoned it was the best thing ever. Not only does the game offer realism to die for, but it also includes a great Arcade mode where even the most heavy-handed player could work their way up to pole position. Like *Wipeout 2097*, *Formula 1* offers plenty of tracks, loads of cars and a

thrilling link-up mode.

Even though the game had more bugs than Princess Di's phone, *F1* soon became the biggest-selling PlayStation title ever. 'Sheer technical excellence yet still immensely playable and Murray Walker to boot' was how



one reader summed the whole thing up perfectly.

4 Wipeout 2097

PSM12 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 5

While *Wipeout* was very hard to get to grips with, the control system for the sequel was much improved, making it a better all-round gaming experience. Add to this its breakneck speed, great new tracks and a vastly improved link-up mode and *Psygnosis* were on to a winner. There's something about *Wipeout 2097* that makes you sit in front of the TV until you've got the new tracks, no matter

what time of day it is.

In any PlayTest of the *Wipeout* series, it would be remiss of the reviewer to fail to mention the soundtrack. Unlike any release before, the game is a perfect match for the music of Orbital, FSOL and, unforgettably, The Prodigy. Here's the reason to buy that Nicam te: you've always wanted

3 Resident Evil

PSM8 9/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 4

Perhaps the best way to describe 3D adventure *Resident Evil* is to use Edinburgh reader Patrick Cowan's summary: 'Blood, guts, blood, zombies, blood, guns and, ahem, more blood'. In the most cinematic game on the PlayStation, you play a member of an elite corps, sent to an old house to search for stranded crash victims. Once inside the house, things go from bad to worse as you discover that it's overrun with zombies and animals which are all after one thing - your blood!

Perhaps the most terrifying game on any console, the game proved incredibly successful for its gameplay, graphics and gore. Try it without the lights on, if you dare.

2 Tekken 2

PSM11 10/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 2

UK gamers wanting a piece of pugilistic perfection found themselves shelling out close to £90 to get hold of an imported copy. By the time the game was given a European release, gamers were clamouring for what was to be the hottest title of the year.

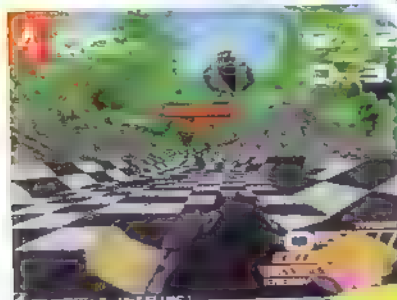
While the original *Tekken* was leagues ahead of any other 32-bit fighter, *Tekken 2* took the beat 'em up genre to new heights. Perhaps what separates *Tekken* from other fighting games is the intuitive

control method. *Virtual*

Fighter 2 may be the better-looking game but you'll have more fun with its PlayStation counterpart.

When it came to reviewing *Tekken 2*, we didn't

hesitate to give it our first ever 10, and, judging by reader comments, it looks like we were right. Peter Ward spoke for us all when he concluded: 'More characters, faster, smoother and more moves. The best beat 'em up'.



Another extraordinarily popular genre. Nearly a quarter of the total entries were for driving games, and this was reflected in the top three games hitting the top six in the overall chart. We were only surprised not to see either of the *Ridge* games in the top three instead of 11th and 15th.

1 Tomb Raider

PSM13 10/10

Industry Top 50 placing - 1

Since the advent of computing there have been few games which could properly be described as 'classics' Pong, Space Invaders, Sonic The Hedgehog, Super Mario World, they all took gaming to a new level And now Tomb Raider on the PlayStation has joined that handful which deserve such a title

When magazines first got hold of the Tomb Raider preview copy, news was that Core Design had something special. But little did people know it would turn into the worldwide phenomenon it is now. After all, how many other lead games characters appear on the cover of the Sunday Telegraph Magazine or sing along with Bono on the current b2 Popmart tour? The cult of Lara has been phenomenal

Initially the game appears daunting, with its overwhelming variety of controls, but a quick run around the Tutorial section sorts out any difficulties. After a couple of

tries, the controls soon become intuitive. From the very first time



you play the game, you're drawn into a digital world unlike any other on the PlayStation. Rarely has the PlayStation seen a game of such beauty; each level is perfectly designed, with the underwater scenes proving particularly spectacular. It's a constant pleasure to play, with each new level bringing a new experience and even more fantastic graphics.

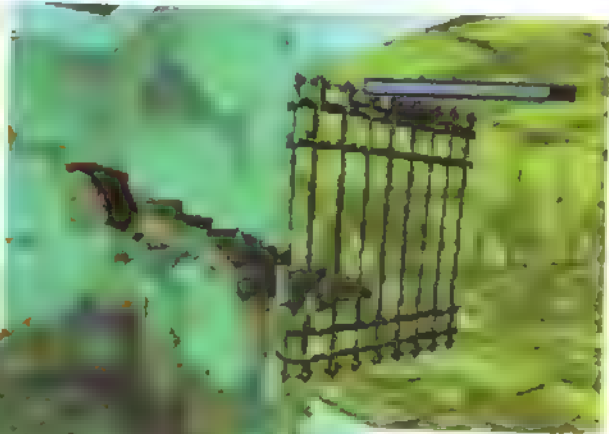
If you're looking for some fighting action, there are plenty of enemies to dispatch on your journey through the tombs. These range from vicious, attacking wolves to the almighty T Rex - surely everyone must have jumped when they first caught a glimpse of it lumbering towards them.

Nearly every voter listed Tomb Raider as one of their top five, putting it head and shoulders above the rest. Indeed it received 30 per cent more votes than its closest rival, Tekken 2. Every reader who included comments with their entries had nothing but praise for the game. James Francis, from Treorchy, said it was 'simply the best game ever', while David Swanston, from Berwick upon Tweed, believed it to be 'brilliant in every sense of the word'.

Ten months after we declared 'You can't play a better game at the moment', this is still the case. A worthy winner, with Tomb Raider 2 already being touted as the sure fire candidate for this award next year.

You don't have to be Mystic Meg to predict which game would be top of the charts. Halfway through counting the votes, it became obvious Tomb Raider was going to walk it. This was no surprise - after all, it was only our second ever 10/10. One big surprise was the success of Discworld; we had expected Fade To Black or Broken Sword to take third place in the adventure stakes.

Tomb Raider: PlayStation 2: Discover



Surprises

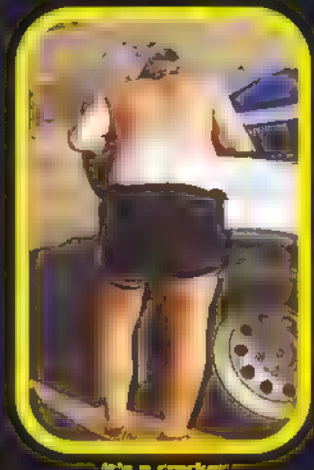
Any survey like this is going to bring its fair share of predictions and surprises. We just didn't reckon on there being quite so many unexpected placings. When we organised all of the votes there were about 70 different games listed, with games like Lomax, Myst and Panzer General all receiving a solitary vote. After scanning the definitive list, we were astonished to find so few votes for golfing games - not even the eminently worthy Actua Golf, a StarPlayer magazine could find its way into the final line up.

The performance of Ridge Racer was a disappointment. Although it reached fifteenth place, we had expected the PlayStation's seminal game - and still one of the best racers - to chart higher, particularly at its new, low price.

Reviewing the Industry Top 50, there were many games that had similar placings to our Readers' Top 50, indeed the top five were the same games but in a different order. If anything, the readers' selection represented a wider choice which included a lot more unexpected choices, such as Sampras Extreme Tennis, making it into the chart.

It will be interesting to see the results next year. Thinking about some of the games due to be released in the next 12 months is making our mouths water: Ridge Racer, Soul Blade, Tekken 3, Syndicate Wars, Oddworld, Rascal G.Police. Looks like it's going to be another good year for games.

**Mountain
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State of the 'Station

Debate

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RABBIT
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BLAH

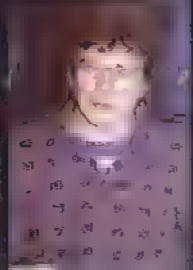
Forum

The totally unofficial PlayStation forum

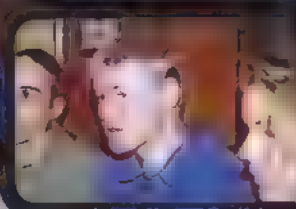
What happens if you get loads of people, leading figures in the industry that surrounds the PlayStation, and put them together in a pub for two hours with access to unlimited beer and as much PlayStation as they can stuff in their mouths? We had no idea, but in bugle we'd try it

Cheers...

Neil Duffield, programmer with Psygnosis (right): 'People go in much more for radical game changes.'



'Arcade quality is what's been really spectacular about the PlayStation', says Bradley, Dep. editor of PSW (below, left).



And so they gathered, Journalists, PR people, programmers and our gobby art assistant, M Ford, to give their views on the current state of the 'Station. The place: The Saracen's Head. Bath. The time: Lunchtime. The topic of conversation: The PlayStation, and mine's a pint of Guinness, cheers...

PSM: We'll start with the big question, then, the N64. It now costs just £150 - is that the death of the PlayStation?

BW: Absolutely not. It's too late for the N64, it doesn't have enough software, and the software it does have is too overpriced. Nintendo didn't get into gear fast enough.

MMB: But surely that could be said of the SNES too. That came out some time after the Megadrive and did very well.

BW: The SNES had less competition, though. It was effectively the second big 16-bit machine.

BW: And it didn't cost £40 more for a game than the Megadrive.

'It's too late for the Nintendo 64. It doesn't have enough software, and the software it does have is too overpriced. Nintendo didn't get into gear fast enough.'

MMB: The N64'll probably sell more than the Saturn, though.

PSM: So what about our coders, Derek and Neil? Are you two gagging to get started on an N64 title?

N: No.

DS: I think the N64's software is far superior to anything on the PlayStation. *Mario Wave Racer*, *Starfox* - all those games are a cut above the PlayStation ones. I've got five titles for my N64, and they're a better than anything on the PlayStation.

PSM: What? Even better than *Tomb Raider*? Be careful, what you say, Derek - Suzie'll be kicking you under the table.

D: Yes, but *Mario* is absolutely incredible. They put so much time and effort into developing it that it's in a different league to anything I've seen on the PlayStation.

MMB: Yeah, but Nintendo can afford to put that time and effort into its own machine. They definitely do have something special about the way they make games - something unique. That's true. Even old titles from the SNES like *Mario Kart* and *Star Wings* are still top-notch games.

Something that does seem to be missing from a lot of

who know what a 64-bit machine is - most of the general public haven't got a clue.

N: That's right.

D: The Sony and the N64 are both 'next generation' machines as far as the public's concerned. They see that the PlayStation costs £129 and that it's got over 200 titles, and that's it. I don't think they make a great distinction between the two machines, and that's why the N64 has had to drop its price so drastically. It's also true that with the price of hardware falling so rapidly and a lot of people already owning a PlayStation, they don't see why they should fork out more money for an N64.

Something we've often said is that when you buy a console you should bear in mind that it'll only last a few years before it becomes obsolete technology. Given that, do you think that the N64 is the next big machine, once the PlayStation fuss has died down, or is it - as Bob said - already too late?

MMB: I think they've launched it at a bad time. People may wait for the PlayStation 2, or even the Saturn 2.

BW: I think it's about customer loyalty, too. If you bought a

PlayStation titles is the replay value. I'm still playing those two SNES games you've just mentioned. *Tomb Raider*'s a great game but once I'd finished it, I didn't really feel like playing it again.

It all depends on where you're coming from, though. I heard a lot of the hype about *Turok* and *Shadows Of The Empire* but when I got to see them, I couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. There's so much variety on the PlayStation that there's bound to be something that will fit into each person's idea of what makes a great game. So Nintendo have to catch up a rather large distance. And for my tastes, a lot of games on the PlayStation are better than the Nintendo titles.

D: Nintendo concentrate on arcade games - those which are just top fun to play.

N: There's no doubt that Nintendo's position will strengthen now that it's getting things like a top-range soccer game.

D: I think it's wrong to imagine that Nintendo games are in a different league, though, because there are some incredible good PlayStation games - a though probably not as many as Sony would like. *Crash Bandicoot*, for example, is an extremely polished title.

DS: I think one of the problems - as far as marketing the machines goes - is that where there may well be a few hardcore gamers

Talking Heads

They can say they were there.

Steve Bradley deputy editor of the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*

Bob Wade managing director of Binary Asylum

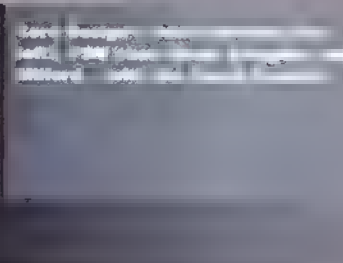
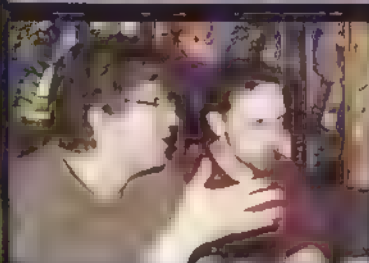
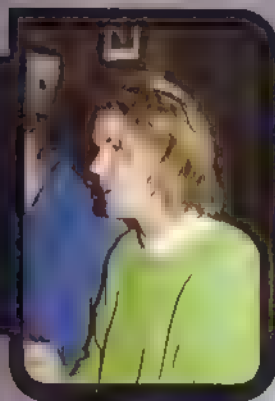
Trenton Webb design manager with Binary Asylum

Suzie Hamilton PR manager with Core Design

Nell Duffield programmer with Psygnosis, working on *G-Police*

Derek Gilchrist programmer with Core Design, working on *Tomb Raider 2*

Milford opinionated PSM art assistant, supposedly along to direct photography



PlayStation a year ago, there's no way that you can feel cheated by what you've got for your money. If you waited 12 months for an N64 to come out, and then bought it at the original price plus £60-£70 for each piece of software, you might well feel a bit cheated now, and I'd question whether you'd be prepared to buy the next Nintendo machine. Sony have got such a head start in terms of a customer base, most of whom, I suspect, will wait for PlayStation 2.

A lot of people are deeply pissed off at what's just happened to the N64's price - those who bought the machine at the full price and now feel like they've wasted £150.

I think there may be a bit of a myth about people waiting for machines. I think hardcore gamers would go out and get a PlayStation even if they knew that the N64 was coming out.

EW Well, it looks like about 20,000 gamers waited for the N64 to come out - that's why the initial batch sold out and then it was just dead on the shelves.

SB That's right. After the initial fuss, PlayStation was outselling the Nintendo by 20 to 1.

Maybe it's all to do with the games that a machine is launched with. The PlayStation had *Ridge Racer* and *Wipeout* and a lot of people are into racing games. When a machine is launched, there's usually a big game associated with it. You go into the shop and there's a big screen with it on, or people playing it, and you want that particular product rather than caring too much about which console it's on. So the idea that people are going to see an advert for a Nintendo and say, 'Oh, I'm not going to buy the game I really want, I'll wait and get a Nintendo instead', is nonsense.

SM Do we need to draw a distinction between what's happening here and what happens in Japan and North America?

EW Absolutely. It's very regional. Europe as a market is completely different to the other two.

SM Do you think that the N64's going to be a big success in America and Japan, but not here?

EW Yes.

SM And does that matter? Does the European market have an influence on what happens in the rest of the world?

EW My feeling? I don't think Nintendo give a toss about Europe. If they did care about Europe, they wouldn't stick those salt borders on their games. They should at least optimise them.

SM Suzie, what about your experience? Where's the buzz in the money makers' line in the PlayStation or the N64?

The PlayStation at the moment. From the developer's point of view, I think developing for the N64 is a bigger gamble than developing for the PlayStation because of the production costs involved. Anything we developed for the Nintendo we'd have to fund ourselves and if we didn't have a big hit we'd lose a lot of money. Having said that - and picking up on the difference between Europe, America and Japan - if we did develop anything for the N64 it would be just to get Japanese and American sales. We'd release it here, but we wouldn't expect anything.

SB The people I talk to in the industry say that Sony are the best team to work with, in terms of support - particularly for third-party developers - and I think that's another big factor in their success. They've stolen a march on the competition and they rightly pride themselves on how well they've done it.

SM So is it a question of whether Nintendo can emulate Sony's success in that area?

'INDUSTRY PEOPLE SAY THAT SONY ARE THE BEST TEAM TO WORK WITH IN TERMS OF SUPPORT - ESPECIALLY THIRD-PARTY DEVELOPERS... THAT'S ANOTHER BIG FACTOR IN THEIR SUCCESS'

EW I don't think they'll ever emulate Sony's success. They just don't work like that.

SM What Nintendo haven't done is actively encourage developers. They've taken what comes across as a pretty negative attitude to developers which is essentially, 'You're going to have to work incredibly hard to please us - you should develop for our machine'. Sony have taken the opposite approach and encouraged everybody to work for their machine. I think both sides have missed a trick. Nintendo just haven't had enough quantity early on, and they're suffering for that, and Sony probably now don't have enough quality throughout their library of titles.

EW Only two per cent of the PlayStation games released last year were AAA titles - games that sold more than 400,000. The majority of titles released for the PlayStation are C-grade.

SM The quality question is only really significant to people who buy a crap title that's got a huge marketing budget behind it. A lot of people buy it and don't get what they expected. ▶

Debate State of the 'Station

► Then you really damage customer loyalty.

PSM: So, we seem fairly sure that the future doesn't belong to the N64. Does it instead belong to the PC?

D: Well, it's certainly true that things are getting better on the PC. We've had some of the new graphics cards in the office recently and they're all unbelievably high quality. But obviously when it comes to price, you really can't compare them. The difference between paying £129 for a PlayStation and more than £1000 for a decent PC is crucial.

► Plus the fact that you can't beat just putting a CD in the drive, shutting the lid and being ready to have a game on the

we're developing *Tomb Raider 2*, which technically is definitely more sophisticated.

► It's not just technically that games will improve, either. Now that the first big wave of games has happened, the people who developed them will be working on new titles. The knowledge they now have of the technology will allow them to be more creative in the time they've got.

► One of the joys of working on the PlayStation is that the CD allows you to make full use of music and Full Motion Video - something we've been trying hard to get right with *G-Police* and I think there's still a lot to be done with that side of things.

► So what big new games are we going to see? What's been getting you all excited and anticipatory?

D: We recently I was walking through our development office and caught sight of *Soul Blade* which some of the Jads had set up on a big test screen. I thought they'd connected up an arcade machine. I'm incredulous what they've managed to do with it. That backs up what Trenton was just saying, because it's been done by the same team that did *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*. *Rage Racer's* looking fantastic too.

► I think that arcade quality is what's been really spectacular about the PlayStation. A couple of years ago

it would have seemed incredible that today you could buy a machine for £129 that delivers arcade quality on to your TV.

PSM: So let's put Derek and Neil on the spot. What exactly are we going to see technically that'll wow us? What's left to be squeezed out of the PlayStation?

D: In all honesty, I think programmers are getting a bit lazy. It's so easy to knock out sequels on the PlayStation. And once you've worked on a second or third generation game and you've translated your engine into Assembly language, you're probably approaching the limits of what the machine can do. Having said that, it can lead to some phenomenal games. If you look at the family trees of great games - *Wolfenstein*, *Doom* and *Quake* for example, or *Dune 2*, *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert* - you can see that if you've got a firm set of ideas about what a game should be like, it frees you to make them more technically exciting. We'll see some more of that on the PlayStation yet.

► We've managed to get some great speed increases for *Tomb Raider 2*, making the engine run much more quickly. Because we now have to use less processor time for that, we're free to do other things and that's just the kind of benefit Neil's talking about. *Tomb Raider 2* will have dynamic lighting throughout, for example, so

'THE PEOPLE WHO DEVELOPED THE FIRST WAVE OF GAMES WILL BE WORKING ON NEW TITLES. THE KNOWLEDGE THEY NOW HAVE OF THE TECHNOLOGY WILL ALLOW THEM TO BE MORE CREATIVE...'

PlayStation. You can't do that with a PC.

PSM: But isn't it the case that people buy PCs for other reasons than games-playing, but that once you've got one, you don't need to buy a PlayStation?

D: I think we're talking about two completely different markets. Actually lots of people have got a PC and a PlayStation as well, think they co-exist quite happily.

SE: On a somewhat different tack, I think that Sony have struck another blow to their opposition with the Platinum range. They had no idea that it was going to be as successful as it is - two of those games are in the console top five.

D: Sony have taken a mass market approach to the whole thing, and it's paid dividends for them.

PSM: Is that going to reflect in the prices of software. Will we see the price of a PlayStation title fall much further?

D: I don't think so, no. It's probably reached as low as it's going to go.

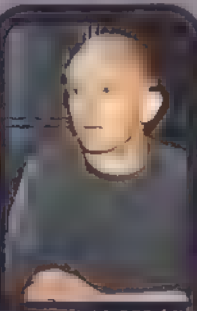
SE: All the stuff that Sony are publishing now costs £34.99. You'll get *Tekken 3* for that price, *Soul Blade* and *NBA*.

PSM: Changing the subject slightly, *Tomb Raider* and *Tekken 2* are both games that have scored 10/10 in PSM. Do you think there are still better games to come for the PlayStation?

D: Well, we know that there'd be a better game because



► Soul Blade doesn't make it into the top five, but it certainly won't make it. Game Boss (E) Trenton Webb, design. Screen shot: Henry Anyton Wright.



Core Design coder, Derek Gilchrist.

Time gen

that ghts w move about and act very differently to the way they do in the first game.

Sure, and that's the added subtlety. People go in much more for radical game changes. *G.R. 2* is the same as *Tomb Raider*.

2. It's got dynamic lighting. We could have people flying in and out, but I'm not sure how many people would notice.

This is something I think the general public don't always understand. The first time you put together a game, although it's not exactly a prototype, it does happen with some fairly technical parameters. When you get the chance to go back and refine what you're doing, you'd change a lot of things, a lot of those changes may be transparent to the consumer.

Next, you said people go in for radical game changes. Do you think that's because the range of ideas is pretty limited? There seem to be endless *Doom* clones, racing games and beat 'em ups, but nothing that's greatly different.

A lot of developers don't even think about that. They just choose the category of game and go for it.

People aren't stupid, though. *Tomb Raider* was something that wasn't particularly defined in any one genre and it's been hugely popular. If you want to take the tired old 'stick to a genre' approach then fine, but the good games will come through.

And it was helped by its great reviews. The first time I saw it I thought, 'It's a *Doom*-clone with an engine that's not as good as *Quakes*', but what the reviews picked up on was the incredible gameplay that's in there too. But it is true that you're taking less of a chance if you stick with a familiar style of game.

Tomb Raider's something else, though. It was released over six months ago and yet it's still in the top five.

1. In *Ridge Racer* you can do is see whether you get the next car or not. In a beat 'em up it's a question of whether you can perform such-and-such a combo. *Tomb Raider* offers you the chance to explore and be part of a story.

Unfortunately though, if the current climate continues I think we'll see less and less ground-breaking games like that. If you go to a publisher with an original idea that doesn't have a licence attached to it or any other marketing hook, you're facing a huge uphill battle to get that game produced. No matter how good a game looks on paper, publishers are very unwilling to put money into unproven ideas.

I remember when the concept of *Tomb Raider* first came up. We were brainstorming ideas and one of the guys said, 'I want to do a game in a pyramid, an action/adventure game'. We did it, but we weren't always sure it would be a hit, particularly on the PC. We're best known as

console developers.

There's a great deal of luck involved in the whole process. *Tomb Raider* got picked up in that meeting and went on to be a hit, but there are hundreds of brilliant ideas gathering dust.

Yes, when Toby first mentioned that it would be a female lead character, everyone said, 'She wouldn't be strong enough, you need to get a broke in there', but he convinced us otherwise.

But by and large we're much more cautious about new ideas. That's partly because of the position of the market. These days, do either get a huge hit or you don't and if your game doesn't make it, to the top 10 you certainly won't make any money from it.

And that's because of the huge costs that are now involved in making games of the quality the consumers

'YAROSE IS A GREAT LEADWORD. IT'LL
PEOPLE TO SAY THAT THEY WANT TO
GAMES IN IT. IT'LL RAISE THE POTENTIAL'

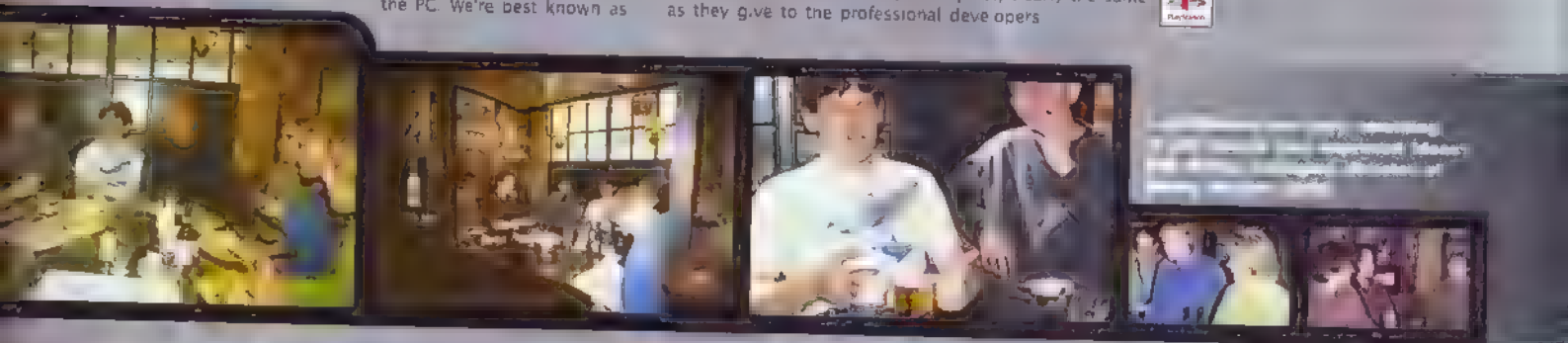
expect. To make a decent game, you're talking about at least a seven figure sum.

But what about Yaroze - isn't that going to be the key to encouraging new ideas to flourish on the PlayStation?

I think it's a wonderful marketing exercise and it will have a significant effect, perhaps more psychologically than practically. I don't think there will be that many PlayStation owners that get hold of one and use it to create something as wonderful as *Tomb Raider*, but it will raise the level of some people's expectations and give them the idea that they can get involved in the games industry. It's the potential.

I think some people will take it up and have a go, but I don't think it'll have as much impact as the home coding phenomenon of the early '80s because the amount of man hours now involved in producing a professional game is too prohibitive. Having said that, it's possible that a group of really keen students, or similar, could make a great game with a Yaroze, but that will be the exception rather than the norm.

If somebody wanted to do it, it's a shame Yaroze's another example of Sony doing things well. The level of support offered to anyone who buys it is pretty nearly the same as they give to the professional developers.

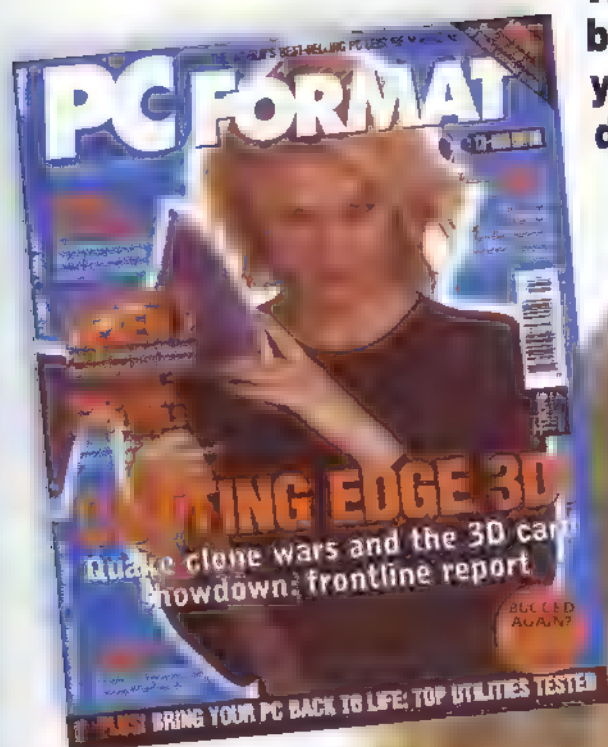


lemen. please

Wipeout 2097 and F1 like you've never seen them before...

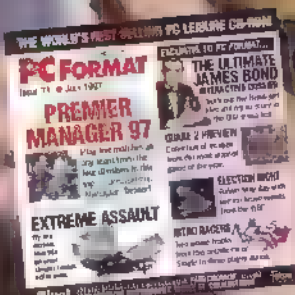
On a souped-up PC you can play *F1* and *Wipeout 2097* in double the resolution, with a view that goes as far as the eye can see. If you want to be on the 3D cutting edge then you need the next issue of *PC FORMAT*.





The new issue of **PC FORMAT** exposes the recent breakthrough in PC 3D graphics that transforms your humble machine into a powerhouse to beat down any console. We test the latest 3D graphics cards and report on the making of *Hexen 2*, as well as bringing you the very latest on *Jedi Knight*, *Unreal* and *Quake 2*.

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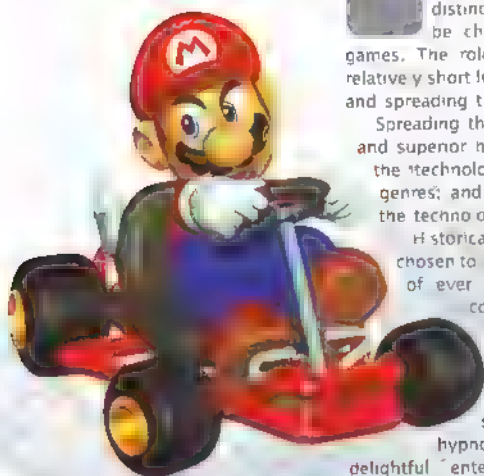
History **Racing games**

THE FAST SHOW

From *Pole Position* to *GT*, from Psygnosis, no other genre has captured the public imagination in the way that the racing game has. And with the release of *Gran Turismo* of *V-Rally*, *Rally Cross* and *Rage Racer*, it seemed only appropriate to document its past.



History Racing games



he driving game needs no introduction, it makes its own. If videogames were organised in a pantheon and given distinct roles, the driving game would be chosen as the messenger of the games. The role of this genre, throughout its relatively short life, has been that of proclamation and spreading the word.

Spreading the word of the existence of new and superior hi-tech videogame technology; of the technology's potential for other game genres; and of what can be expected from the technology in the immediate present.

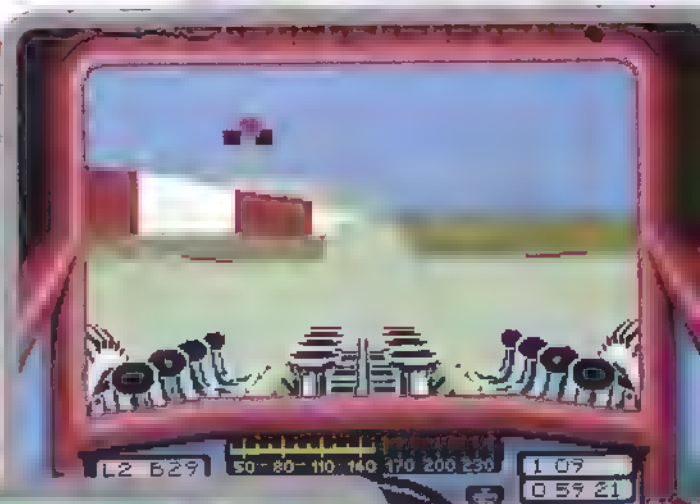
Historically the driving game has been chosen to illustrate the features and benefits of ever more powerful videogame and computing technology. Above all other game genres, the driving game has the power to enthral and captivate with displays of blistering technical superiority, spooky hypnotic brain states and delightful entertainment value. In short, the driving game is charged with the responsibility of creating an unforgettable experience that every participating party talks about for ages afterwards – a dream occurrence for marketing men.

Over the period of 15 years, since Namco's *Pole Position* (1982) first made an impact on the public imagination, driving games have evolved and developed into sophisticated reality engines able to offer participants an experience which rivals the real – not so much a virtual reality, more an alternative reality. In that period of time, also, *Pole Position* has exponentially shrunk in status to that now

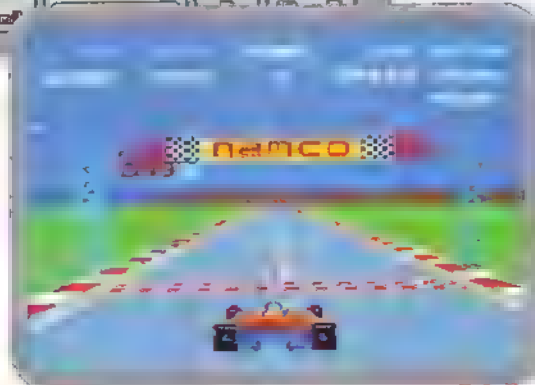
The role of the driving game, throughout its relatively short life, has been that of proclamation and spreading the word

reserved for *Bill and Ben*, the LED watch and the ZX81 – that is, a redundant embarrassing joke.

The only resemblance *Pole Position* had to driving in the real world was that you controlled a car-shaped sprite using an analogue steering wheel and pedal. The rest of the game was more a dodgems up, played over a flickering scrolling road. Anyone who had pretensions of being good at *Pole Position* because they were good at real driving realised immediately that in no way were the two pastimes remotely related. Try *Pole Position*



Primitive driving games, such as *Stunt Car* and *Pole Position*, may have paved the way for others, but essentially they were simple dodgems up played over a flickering, scrolling road. They were fun to play, but mastering them often had little to do with the skills involved in driving a real vehicle.



out in *Namco Museum Vol 1* to see the differences for yourself.

Still, *Pole Position* set the scene for the driving game to make ever more in-roads in the arcades, and in the consoles and computers of home-based gamers. Many of the most successful home computer and console games were licences of the arcade machines – *Pole Position*, *Hang On*, *Super Hang On*, *OutRun*, *Final Lap*, *Power Drift*, *Hard Drivin*, *Super Monaco GP*. *Pole Position*'s sprites, flickering scrolling road and 3D-ish

TIME LINE: '82-'92

Pole Position 1982: Arcade

Hang On 1985: Arcade

OutRun 1986: Arcade

Power Drift 1988: Arcade

Super Sprint 1982: Arcade

Super Hang On 1986: Arcade

Stunt Car Racer 1988: ST, Arcade

Final Lap 1988: Arcade



Virtua Racing was the ultimate flat-shaded polygon racer, making full use of Sega's cutting-edge model 1 arcade board. With four separate views and an unparalleled driving feel it was the best of its time.

perspective was enough to convey a sense of speed and motion that gamers liked. It was the start of a long drawn out love affair between drivers, their driving games, and their driving games' host machines

Top-down racers

At round about the same time as *Pole Position* was strutting its stuff in arcades and pubs, Atari released the grand-daddy of top-down racing games with its *Sprint* series, culminating in *Super Sprint*. Here was the opportunity for four players to compete against one another in different cars on the same track simultaneously. While still not offering anything like a driving experience, it did manage to convey the slight feel of how a car would react in certain circumstances. It also allowed players to indulge in real driving behaviour, such as blocking an opponent from overtaking and driving for the shortest line on corners. In the heyday of the Atari ST, the conversion of *Super Sprint* from the arcade machine blurred the dividing line between home and arcade machines.

The top-down racer has evolved into the eminently more exciting, cute, and amusing *Micro Machines* from Codemasters. Despite numerous clones and competitors, no other top-down racer has come close to emulating its success in terms of sales or enjoyment. Unlike its 3D cousins, who made the conversion from sprite-based technology to polygon and texture map technology around about 1989, the top-down racer doesn't rely anywhere near as heavily on technology at the cutting edge.

1986 witnessed one of the major shifts in the relationship between man, machine and the driving game. The name of the game? *OutRun*. *OutRun* introduced Super Scaler technology, a force-feedback steering wheel, and a new slant on

traditional racing game design - ie you got to choose different routes in order to finish the various stages. Most of all, the speed, sonics, and graphic beauty that *OutRun* displayed blew the competition out of the water. Even SEGA's *Hang On* and *Super Hang On*, with their motorcycle cab nets, couldn't compete. All home platform

With *Stunt Car Racer*, for the first time, came a driving game which presented a convincing perspective to rival the real...

conversions of *OutRun*, from the ZX Spectrum to the Commodore Amiga, were poor - due, in part, to sloppy conversion work from US Gold's programmers but mostly due to the inferiority of the host machines when trying to emulate software that ran on such innovative hardware.

In the history of the driving game, *OutRun* is an outstanding landmark. Grown men can come over all dew-eyed and tearful when reminiscing on their misspent youth down at the arcade, playing *OutRun*.

But driving game innovation wasn't all a one-way street from arcade machine to home systems. In 1988 *Stunt Car Racer*, by Sir Geoff Crammond on the Atari ST and Amiga, introduced the gaming world to the polygon racer. Here, for the first time, was a driving game which presented a convincing perspective to rival the real - an outrageously frivolous but realistic driving sensation. And due to the marriage ▶



Indy Car Racing, on the PC, took realism in racing games to new heights again, with external and rotating views as shown here, and crashes which looked exactly like the real thing. Attention to car detail was also impressive.

Powerdrome 1989: Atari ST

Hard Drivin 1989: Arcade

F1 1991: Amiga

Super Mario Kart 1992: SNES

Winning Run 1989: Arcade

Super Monaco GP 1990: Arcade, MD

F1 GP 1991: Amiga, PC

Suzuka Eight Hours 1992: Arcade



History Racing games

[From left to right] *Micro Machines V3*, *Formula One Grand Prix*, and *Out Run* have all had varying effects on the market. *F1 GP* on the Amiga had a stunning impact on people's imaginations back in 1991. *Micro Machines* and *Out Run*, while having a more cartoon feel to them, nevertheless introduced elements of driving such as holding your line and blocking paths.



No computer-based driving game has quite repeated the impact *F1 GP* had on the driving-game public's imagination...

► of the two, it managed to induce in the driver a feeling of being there

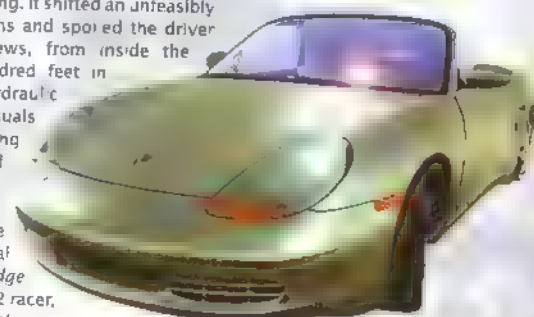
What's more, in an innovation not picked up on or hyped by the marketing men, *Stunt Car Racer* could be linked to another machine, allowing two players to race head to head without being put through the squinting agony of playing on a split-screen. In 1994, in their retroview page, leading industry magazine *EDGE* even went so far as to lament *Stunt Car Racer's* lack of conversion to console formats: 'They don't make 'em like they used to... with today's in-cart technology, SNES and Mega Drive owners could have enjoyed one of the greatest racing games ever'

Stunt Car Racer eventually evolved into the most realistic driving game ever to hit home computing when *Formula One Grand Prix* made its debut on the Amiga in 1991. Instantly, a legend was born. It was eventually overtaken in the

realism stakes by the likes of *Indy Car Racing* on the PC, but no computer-based driving game has quite repeated the impact *F1 GP* had on the driving-game public's imagination; unless you count the even more realistic '96 sequel, *F1 GP2*

Coin-op manufacturers got in on the polygon act in 1989 when Namco introduced *Winning Run*. Although not as successful in the fame and fortune stakes as Atari's seminal *Hard Drivin*, the polygon racer made such an impression that the world and its grandmother knew that herein lay the future of the driving game

The ultimate flat-shaded polygon racer was *Virtua Racing*. Produced using SEGA's cutting-edge Model 1 coin-op board, a mere five years on from its release, *Virtua* looks odd by today's standards. At the time, it was amazing. It shifted an unfeasibly high amount of polygons and spoiled the driver with four separate views, from inside the cockpit to several hundred feet in the air. Add to this a hydraulic cabinet, super-fast visuals and an unparalleled driving feel, and *Virtua* rivalled the real. Competing against friends on linked machines could only have been bettered by the real thing. And then? *Ridge Racer*, Namco's System 22 racer, appeared. But that's another story.



TIME LINE: '92-'96

No Second Prize 1992: Amiga

Road Rash 1992: MegaDrive

Indy Car Racing 1993: PC

Daytona 1994: Arcade

Need For Speed 1992: MegaDrive

Virtua Racing 1992: Arcade

Ridge Racer 1993: Arcade

Stunt Race FX 1994: SNES

I CAME, I SAW, I DROVE YOUR PLAYSTATION

The most outstanding driving game of the decade, for grabbing public attention and reviving the enthusiasm of gamers old and new, has undoubtedly been Namco's *Ridge Racer*. When the first UK bound *Ridge Racer* cabinet made an appearance at the Trocadero in London, all of the other driving games suddenly looked dated. *Final Lap*, *Virtua Racing*, *OutRunners*, *Driver's Eyes*, *Suzuka Eight Hours*, etc., all suffered drastically from reduced coinage intake: everyone wanted to either play or watch *Ridge Racer*.

RR's blend of realistic 3D perspective, texture-mapped polygons, all-encompassing soundtrack, incisive control dynamics, and compulsive gameplay produced a different experience which more than justified claims that it was the ultimate driving game. That *Ridge* was chosen by Sony to be THE game to launch the PlayStation in Japan was an inspired decision. The arcade-perfect conversion probably helped sell more PlayStations than Sony and Namco could ever have hoped for: testament indeed to the protracted love affair that the gamer has with the driving game.

In order to gain some perspective and quite possibly have a laugh at the older consoles' primitivism, there now follows a brief retrospective overview of the main movers and shakers in the world of the console driving game.

It's impossible to discuss driving videogames without alluding to the prime

control system, and texture-mapped polygons conspired to produce a mini treasure that belied the power of the badly ageing game console.

On the other side of the console coin, Sega's Mega Drive had a smattering of mildly amusing driving games. Co-op conversions on the Master System and Mega Drive, such as *OutRun* and *Power Drift*, were infinitely superior to other conversions. *Virtua Racing* even made it on to the MD and SX32, but by the time it arrived, in

***Ridge Racer* probably helped sell more PlayStations than Sony and Namco could ever have hoped for**

1994, it was too late for it to be of any significance.

Up until EA's *Road Rash* made an appearance on the Mega Drive in 1992, the best driving game available for the system was the conversion of Sega's coin-op, *Super Monaco GP*. *Road Rash* injected some variety into the standard scrolling, sprite-based racer. This time round, being the fastest driver wasn't all that was needed to win races: you had to fight with fellow competitors too. Strategy also reared its head, with the player able to buy faster bikes and improved weapons.

At the present time, it would be fair to say that the arcades and home consoles are saturated with driving games. But that can only be good for PlayStation. Developers are becoming more experimental with the basic driving engines. *Twisted Metal* and *TM2* for example, put you behind the wheel of various weapon-carrying vehicles with different handling characteristics. And if you have a PlayStation owning friend with a link cable, you can indulge in full-screen battles that rival *Doom* for excitement.

No overview of the PlayStation driving game scene could be considered complete without mention of *FX*. It's the driving man's wet dream, one, because it's possibly the most satisfying racing experience outside of actually driving a Formula One car; two, it means you don't have to fork out a good grand a half to get a halfway decent machine on which to play *F1 Grand Prix 2*. For this one game and the PlayStation itself, Psygnosis and Sony should be revered.

Despite *Sega Rally*'s conversion to the Saturn, the botched *Daytona* conversion still means that the 'Station is streets ahead of the Sega Saturn in the driving game war. So much so that if you're even only remotely interested in driving games, the PlayStation is the natural choice of the winner.



Namco, the home of classic racing games over the years.

reference game, *Super Mario Kart*. Despite having as much in common with driving as a baby's arm has with commercial radio-broadcasting, the impact made by this game can't be underestimated. *Mario* triumphed in terms of design, content, and entertainment value. The courses were suitably small and tight, and their circuitous nature meant that the driver was usually at ways in conflict with at least one other car. Weapons and power-ups added a new dimension, which meant that even the worst driver could still be in with a chance of winning a race. Many of the best elements of *Wipeout* owe a debt of gratitude to *Mario*.

Other than *Mario Kart*, the SNES produced no memorable driving games, with the exception of *Stunt Race FX*. Cartoon-style vehicles, an inspired



Three of the best on the PlayStation but all with vastly different gameplays. *Ridge Racer*, at the top, perhaps the most famous racing game ever. *Twisted Metal*, a real blast. And *F1*, the master of Grands Prix.

Great games, the lot of them. From the top: *Ridge Racer*, *Mario Kart*, *Road Rash*, *Virtua Racing* and *Destruction Derby 2*. Of course, *Ridge* was instrumental in the PlayStation's birth. Equally, *Mario Kart* was huge on the SNES and *Road Rash* a big title for the Mega Drive, as was *Virtua Racing*.

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Water Toon Grand Prix 1994: PlayStation | Destruction Derby 1995: PlayStation | Sega Rally 1995: Arcade | F1 GP2 1996: PC |
| Daytona GP 1994: Arcade | Screamer 1995: PC | Wipeout 1995: PlayStation | Ridge Racer Revolution 1996: PlayStation |



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Racing games History

The future of the driving game in relation to the PlayStation's increasing success will be hard to predict. Whatever happens, though, the driving game will leave its mark and inevitably break new ground as design becomes ever more sophisticated. Here we take a quick speculative look into the future and muse on what might come to pass for that most loved and loathed of game genres – the driving game.



Ridge Racer is set to lift the Namco reputation to even greater heights and continue the Ridge lineage.

STARTING A NEW RAGE RACER

Tenaciously clinging to the theory that one track is good, Namco discover that their customisation options, allowing drivers the freedom to design their own car livery, becomes a cult hit. Magazines dedicate whole sections to various car designs. Competitions and promotions are arranged to find the best car designers. Developers



of other genres start adding a sort of simple-to-use 3D modelling tools and art packages to their games. The competition to design Lara Croft's car becomes a money-spinning craze the likes of which hasn't been seen since the advent of the Spice Girls. Prestigious competition winners are offered dream ticket jobs dealing with the development company of their choice.

TAKING THE PORSCHE CHALLENGE

Following Porsche's innovative nu-media lead, Ford, Vauxhall, Rover, BMW, et al. suddenly realise that maybe their current marketing approach to nu-media advertising should change. With PlayStations making ever more inroads into the homes of families throughout Europe, here is the perfect CD medium to showcase the features and benefits of a new or improved car range. What's more, it's likely to cost the company less than half a million pounds – where else can you get this

much exposure for such a low price?

The European Community, meanwhile, realising that artistic licence may just fall into the realms of advertising distortion, form a new independent body which ensures that cars respond in a manner akin to the real thing. Eventually, car advertising in this form becomes so common that anyone wanting to can walk into a car showroom and walk out again with a free, ready-to-play game for their PlayStation. Who knows, the game might even influence a real live purchasing decision.



Porsche Challenge has produced polarised reactions. You either love it or you hate it. We're keen!

WACKY MONSTER TRUCK MOTOR TOON RACES

Vast swathes of drivers soon become bored with the never-ending range of straight, realistic driving games. Enter *Wacky Monster Truck Motor Toon Races*, which injects ashlings of characters and an outrageously frivolous lack of respect for the laws of physics.

A simultaneous release, with a specially created cartoon series of the same name, ensures maximum exposure and mega success. The cartoon characters

are so funny and adorable that the game quickly becomes the best selling game of a time.

The active demand for different versions of the game to parallel the plot lines of broadcast cartoons becomes the development challenge of the new millennium. Developers and cartoon creators alike develop a strong guest character inventory to keep the new games fresh. Some of the guest characters are created by the players of the original game.



Enter the off-landers. Monster Trucks is a brave title which perhaps doesn't satisfy fully.

WHAT THE F1 ARE YOU DOING?

Cable television subscribers become the first people in the country able to take part in nationwide networked *Formula 1* races. Coordinated using a scheduled television programme, the races are responsible for a marked increase in PlayStation sales and cable subscriptions. The *Sunday Times Culture* magazine captures the buzz when its

cover headline asks, 'F1 Network – Videogame, Sport or Way of Life?'. Style mags feature articles entitled 'What F1 car design tells you about its driver?' Jeremy Clarkson becomes the first celebrity to win a Europe-wide challenge cup and spreads the word that this is almost as much fun as the real thing. Murray Walker has a heart attack finding out for himself.

TIME LINE: '96-'97

Destruction Derby 2 1996: PlayStation

Wipeout 2097 1996: PlayStation

Formula 1 1996: PlayStation

Rage Racer 1997: PlayStation

Twisted Metal 1996: PlayStation

Cyber Cycles 1996: Arcade

GTI Club 1997: Arcade

V-Rally 1997: PlayStation

You get nowt for coming

F1 cars generate 700 bhp and can reach speeds in excess of 200mph. Yet still, it's **THE MOST BORING SPORT IN THE WORLD.**

Delivers realistic and controllable models of all F1 cars. Puts F1 into a form that is exciting and demands skill from the player.

The price of the PC needed to do this justice could buy 4 Stations, 4 copies of F1, 4 colour portables and 2 Sony link leads. Yikes.

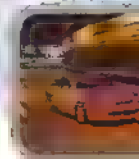
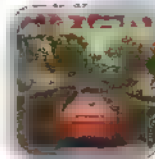
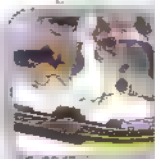
Two-player thrills without the need for a link lead or a split-screen. A testament to high-impact-plastic analogue technology.

The only snag is that sooner or later Mr Copper'll send you away to a PlayStation-less place far at least 3 years...

Fed up with tano crawlers? For sheer glee through malevolence, TM takes the chequered flag with a bang.

Control is finicky and sluggish, the competition drive like a flock of sheep on rails. Nice face, shame about the legs.

Experiencing new lease of life due to Platinum range status. *Ridge* the game that defined the n generation.



Conveys a realistic sensation of speed. Has the potential to leave you dizzy after hundreds of races and watch the opposition wilt.



When state-of-the-art electronic driving games come face to face with a *tour de force* like F1, they must be relegated to the attic.



Mighty enjoyable and worthy of praise, but TM isn't capable of pole position against RR. Even though, at one stage, the gap between them was less than a second...



Where do you start? 17 courses, 13 different cars, a far more satisfying driving feel. Plus the option to play in arcade or realistic mode. Oh and don't forget the link-up option...

Tries its best, with an attractive £20 price tag. But when all's said and done even RR's cars feel more like mid-engined shopping trolleys than mid-engined motor vehicles.



When it comes to push and shove, there isn't a great deal separating the two. Looked at closely, F1 offers a more intense experience compared to the more generalised futuristic ambience of *Wipeout 2097*. With F1 the player only faces defeat if they screw up. *Wipeout* can be more arbitrary in this area. Who's to blame if hit by a stray missile? Not the player every time. Also, despite verging on being irritating, the Murray Walker commentary is actually an excellent tutor. He never lets you off the hook for poor driving.



For all the hype that surrounded the bugs in F1, nobody could deny that it had pushed the PlayStation to the very limit of its capabilities. With the spot on recreations of the Grand Prix tracks of the world, the all-consuming gameplay and Murray's distinctive tones it remains our favourite racing game. For now...



second

Sixteen cars are on the grid for the start of the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine Racing Game Championships*. There can only be one winner, the chequered flag goes up, the light is green, and they're off...

Not a racing game in its own right, but one of few games that actually lets you take out pedestrians. So a thumbs-up.

'Oh, it was so new and exciting. Rolling hills, spectacular crashes, force feedback steering wheel, choice of routes...'

When compared with today's racers, Sir Geoffrey Crammond's creation is more than a bit stunted.

With intuitive controls, ambient sound FX and cool soundtracks, *2097* just makes it into the stratosphere of a Zen game.

Possibly the ultimate driving experience. Especially if linked up against a mate on the arcade version.

Super Mario Kart is another of those racers which rates higher in Mode 7 nostalgia value than it's actually worth.

Couldn't fall but qualify. Arguably made the biggest impact of any driving game to hit the arcades.

A late entry, but one that has muscled its way in due to its sheer weight of options and graphical accuracy.



Despite taking the easiest and fastest routes, driving in the manner of the perfectionist, *2097* is still the purer of the two racers...



Console chic versus '80s innovation. When it comes to man and machine in perfect harmony, *2097* comes closest.



Hydraulics, force feedback, blistering speed, realism... *V-Rally* audaciously tries to take on *Sega Rally* at its own game. And wins!



Wipeout has made it this far without really flexing its muscles. Has graphic beauty and breathtaking speed, and is just as enjoyable as a one-player game as it is when played with two.

V-Rally has put up a sterling (Moss) effort, but has to give way to the thumping tracks, and smooth playability of *2097*. This one will come again, though, and has a great future ahead.



So although in the context of our competition *F1* takes the champagne and sprays it firmly in the face of *Wipeout 2097*, both games come out with their heads held high. *F1* has the added realism and great courses that tipped it for us, but on another day the result could have been different. Both are superb racing games.

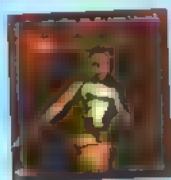


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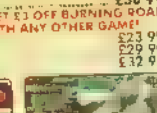
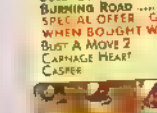
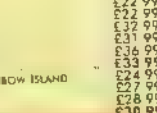
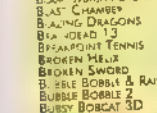
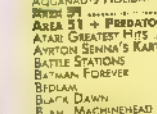
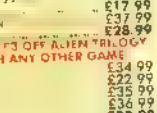
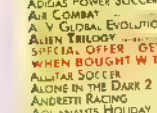
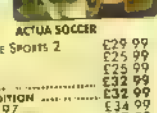
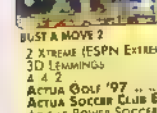
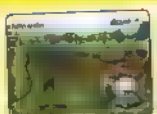
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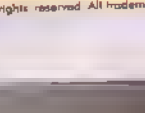
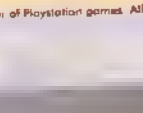
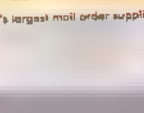
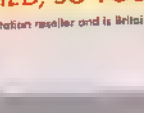
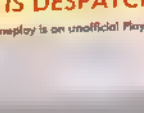
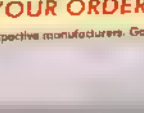
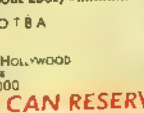
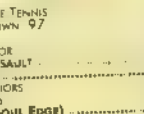
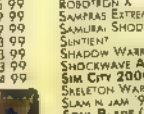
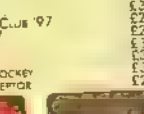
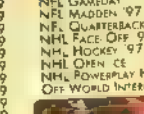
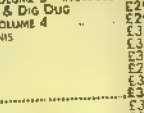
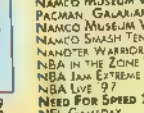
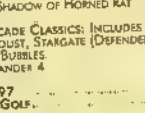
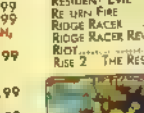
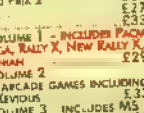
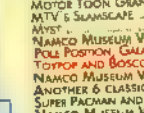
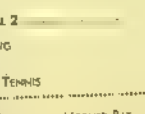
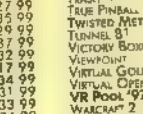
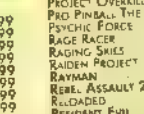
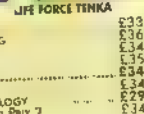
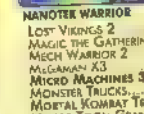
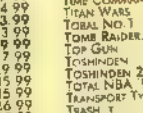
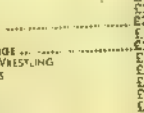
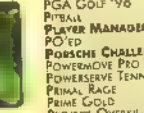
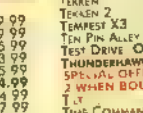
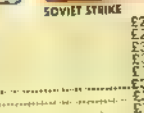
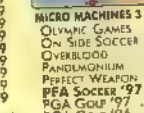
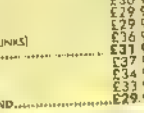
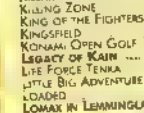
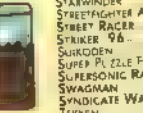
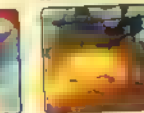
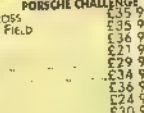
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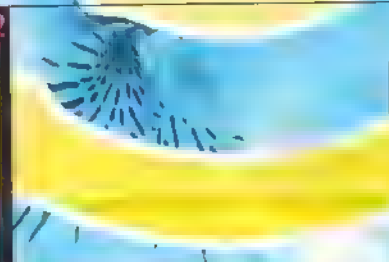
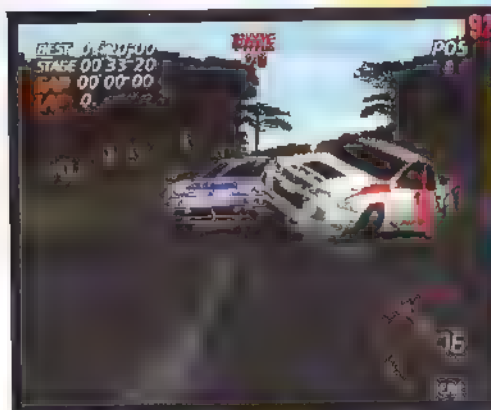
NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW





- 10** PSM is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect.
- 9** A splendid piece of software - recommended without prejudice.
- 8** Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner.
- 7** A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase.
- 6** A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable with some dodgy bits.
- 5** Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but worth buying - just.
- 4** Below average. Probably has some serious gameplay or lifespan flaws.
- 3** Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrow a couple of days.
- 2** Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured and short-lived.
- 1** A product without merit, beyond human endurance.
- 0** Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.

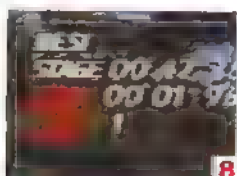
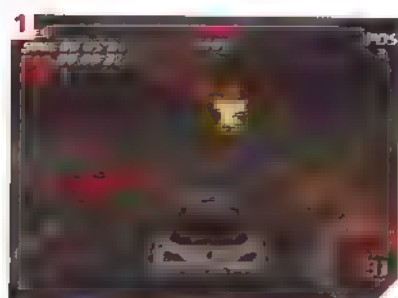
 Special games which we think deserve to go on our 'must buy' list are also awarded our StarPlayer logo.

PlayTest

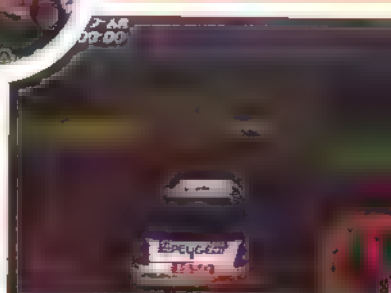
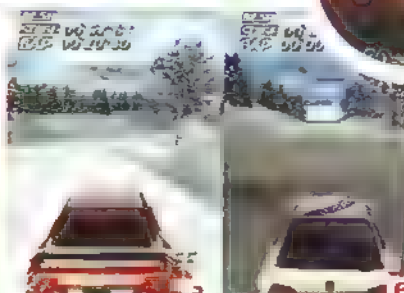
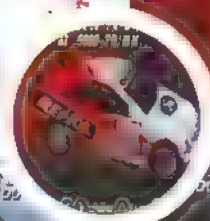
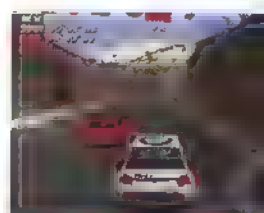
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[1] You can race through a number of different times of the day. Here's sunset.
[2] The Swedish tracks are blessed with snow.
[3] The narrow courses in the French Alps are some of the most exciting in the game.
[4] Gravel tracks require you to change the car tyres in order to grip.
[5] Headlamps light the course at night.
[6] The vertical split-screen is superb.
[7] Collision imminent.
[8] You can always improve your lap times.



V-Rally

French coders **Infogrames** are best known for their adventure games, but this rally race is surely their **most ambitious project yet**. Chequered flag or back of the grid?



The PlayStation has been waiting for its rally game. Indeed, it's the Saturn's only claim to fame that *Sega Rally* shoots the mud at a pace which, in the past, we have been but able to marvel at. Sure, we've seen racing games galore but not the sort where the dirt flies abroad. *Penny Racers*, that quirky chap, was never going to wrestle any mantles and it's been left to the *Ridge Racers* and *Wipeouts* to assume the racing superiority. *V-Rally* is the first serious attempt at making Inroads into scrambling territory and French coders Infogrames have driven across the plains to ensure that it makes the rostrum, with wreath neck-bound and champagne cork popping with buster. But, boy, is it tricky to get to grips with. The powers that be have deemed that *V-Rally* should err on the side of 'simulation', - that unsure territory where computer gaming is

regarded as being 'realistic'.

Let's talk specifics, if we may be so bold. The game encompasses the particulars to which RAC officials would be proud. Circuits abound, cars proliferate. Infogrames reckon that, counting the cost of the weather, there's some 45 tracks to tour and 11 cars to crouch behind the wheel. Be in no doubt that *V-Rally* is a huge game; by far the most comprehensive racer on this, or any other platform, bar *Psygnosis' FT!*

huge game; by far the most comprehensive

[platform, bar *Psygnosis' FT!*]



■ PUBLISHER

Ocean

■ DEVELOPER:

Infogrames

■ RELEASE DATE:

Out now

■ ORIGIN:

France

■ PRICE:

£49.99

■ STYLE:

Rally racer

Rally round the chequered flag

V-Rally offers the racer some 11 cars to begin with, ranging from the smaller, more manoeuvrable cars to the really powerful beasts from Mitsubishi and Subaru. The Citroën Saxo is a safe bet for the beginner.



The Escort Mexico, which was knocking around in about 1970, remains one of the greatest rally cars and Ford are constantly updating the Escort to keep abreast of the times. Here's the '97 version.

The Mitsubishi Lancer EV4 is one of the most powerful cars in V-Rally. It certainly takes time to get used to the handling, but when you learn to swing it around the bends, you can really cut down on the lap times.



The Renault Maxi Megane UK is one of the mid-range rally cars. With its four-wheel drive, the Renault grips the surface but doesn't quite have the beastly power of the Mitsubishi Lancer and the mighty Subaru.



[1] At the start of each race, a map shows you where you are heading. [2] Driving at night, as in real life, requires a lot more care and judicious use of the brakes. [3] Infogrames like the Alps best.



Speaking with candour, we were a little unsure about V-Rally when it first parked on the grid. Nobody could control the cars, y'see. Crip the banking and you can bounce the car for 50 yards. And there is a certain inevitability with racing games, in that everyone wants the cars to behave exactly the same as their Ridge Racer counterparts. 'Why can't you powerslide like you can in Ridge?', cry the chattering cassettes. 'Surely realism should be kept to real life - we play videogames to escape from the numbing reality of everyday life', they'd probably continue. But with some two hours perseverance, you begin to get a 'feel' for the movement of the cars. Instead of braking viciously at every twist and turn, you swing the back end around and hit the accelerator to head back into the straight. And it's the most marvellously satisfying feeling when you manoeuvre it 'just so'. Remember the days when that trigonometry question was a baffler, and then the answer dawned on you? It's like turning on a light bulb. Suddenly, you just 'know'.



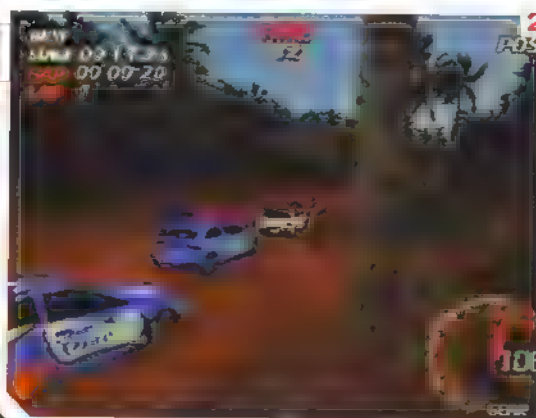
Each of the cars behaves in different ways. The idea is that they respond in the way their 'real life' counterparts would; indeed, all of the cars are officially licensed through manufacturers such as Peugeot, Renault, Mitsubishi and Subaru, and adhere to the correct

specifications. Infogrames even went so far as to acquire the services of rally champ Ari Vatanen to aid them in their quest for fine attention to detail. Experimenting with the cars is essential if you want to progress through the championship. For instance, the Mitsubishi and Subaru are both lightning-fast, but not as easy to career around the bends, while the smaller, less powerful cars like the Seat and Skoda are great for the beginner.

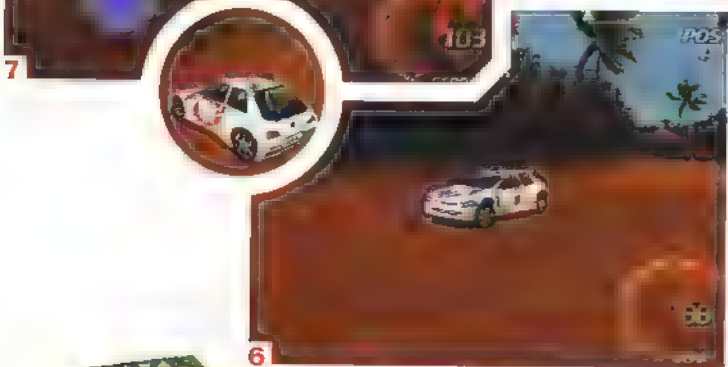
The wealth of circuits is mind-blowing. You can play for days and still find courses you haven't yet raced. In the Arcade section, there are four easy courses, six medium and eight difficult. In Championship mode, you race rallies in nine locations across the world with three stages in each. And can race the Time Trials on any circuit you like. This isn't overkill, either. You genuinely will enjoy discovering the foibles of what it's like to race on snow, skid on gravel and hurtle along tarmac; about the difficulty of driving the night stages with no lights but the headlights to direct you.

Many of the circuits are beautifully constructed. They're not accurate to a tee, more an indication of the real thing. Some of the English courses are very similar to Cumberland, with small, winding roads, huge drop-offs (you can occasionally glimpse a lake), sheep grazing in the fields and even the odd red telephone box at the side of the road. When the engine growls and you're hurtling ▶





(1) Well the timeless wonder that is the telephone box. (2) A silvery jungle circuit, although occasional narrow, are great to drive along. (3) For an evening kick off. (4, 5) You can choose between a horizontal and vertical split-screen when you race with two players. The general consensus is that the vertical divide is the best. (6) Replay the race. (7) The lens flare effect is excellent.



► along in the 'in-car' view, you really do feel like you're in a rally car. Most will have seen film footage of what it's like to be a co-driver (*Grandstand* is wont to show it), the car skidding furiously, gravel flying – *V-Rally* is as close as it gets. You have to ensure that your car is kitted out for the particular conditions – if you don't have the right tyres, you

own is the split-screen, two-player option

[the screen is split vertically]

won't have a chance. Gravel, snow and asphalt are the main fellows, the latter the trickiest of them all

Where *V-Rally* really comes into its own is the split-screen, two-player option. Originally Infogrames a so planned for a four-player link mode but it proved unfeasible. Never mind, for the two-player game is wonderful, especially when the screen is split vertically. The early Corsican circuit on tarmac proved particularly popular in the office, the 'one more go' scenario proving the rule that when you put gamers head to head, they can play all day.

So, where's the catch? It looks brilliant, the engines sound great (the music is awful guitar stuff – turn it off), there are loads of cars and courses, it's a two-player game... Well, for some the car handling is a mite too tricky. Some prefer the immediacy of Namco's fine arcade examples, but *V-Rally* does require one's attention; it needs to be played at length in order to discover its intricacies. And it's a game that this correspondent will be playing for a long time

Alternatively...

<i>V-Rally</i>	9/10	PS
<i>Ridge Racer</i>	9/10	PS
<i>Ridge Racer</i>	9/10	PS
<i>Penny Racers</i>	5/10	PS

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 20

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Very good 9

■ GAMEPLAY:

Can be tricky 8

■ SOUND:

Engine yes, music no 7

■ PRESENTATION:

Unfussy 7

■ LIFESPAN:

Enormous 9

■ ORIGINALITY:

Well, it is 8

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ISSUE 46 ON SALE NOW

Play/ces!



Obviously many of the images that are used to show *Ridge Racer* are very similar. But they all tell a different story: (1) Entering the final lap. At last! (2) *Ridge Racer* game would be complete without a tunnel. (3) Look at that colour scheme. (4) On the crest of a hill. (5) Those ubiquitous tunnels. (6) 'Teach that sucker a lesson'. (7) 22-year-old Reiko Nagase. A babe. (8) Just try to powerslide! (9) It's steeper than it looks. (10) What a stunning-looking waterfall. (11) Expect plenty of Namco advertisements. (12) The final straight. (13) And yet another of those testing hills.



PUBLISHER

SCEE ■ DEVELOPER

Namco

RELEASE DATE

Out now

■ ORIGIN

Japan

PRICE

£39.99

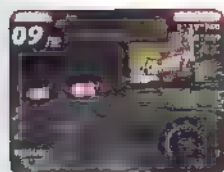
■ STYLE

Racing



Rage Racer

Namco have shown that when it comes to producing racing games, there is no finer exponent. In this, the third in the series, they've developed the experience even further...



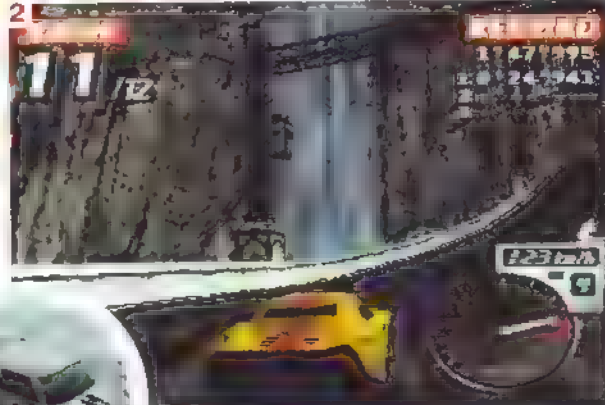
In the words of Carly Simon, 'Nobody does it better'. Namco's commitment to the PlayStation has been a major factor in Sony's successful excursion into territory once dominated by Sega and Nintendo. *Ridge Racer*, one of the first titles released on the PlayStation, remains a standard bearer, a game which recently topped the charts once again, albeit dressed in its newly-tailored Platinum threads. The sequel, *Ridge Racer Revolution*, was somewhat disappointing, however. We'd become used to the all-out, pedal-to-the-metal thrills of its predecessor and *RRR*'s winding curves left many feeling rather deflated. And the link-up mode option didn't help a deal, simply because so few have the capacity to go head to head.

But it is welcome the third in the series with an open mind, content in the knowledge that Namco rarely disenchants. In fact, as luck would have it, *Rage Racer* is the beefiest number to date, with more tracks, a fabulous selection of cars, and an excellent Grand Prix section. Indeed, it is in the latter where *Rage* scores most points. We'll scoot back to this in a mo', though.

This, the third 'Racer' in the series, is perhaps one of the year's most eagerly-awaited releases. We, at PSM, have been hanging on for a PAL (Phase Alternate Line – the term for the UK TV standard) copy of the game for an age and, pleasantly enough, the cars dash along at a fair old pace. And it's reassuringly difficult to detect any noticeable difference between this and the Japanese version which preceded it by ▶



(1) When you use the in-car perspective, you get the rear-view mirror. (2) The Mini goes like the wind when you tune it. (3) And it's night-time.



[1] The circuits combine geographical elements from a number of countries. From the streets of San Francisco to the ruins of Greece. [2] And here's the gushing waterfall. Listen out for the sound. [3, 4] The replay feature shows the cars from a number of different angles.

to date, with more tracks, a fabulous

excellent Grand Prix section

► some seven months

Somewhat strangely, *Rage Racer*'s awfully drab of palette, noticeably so when compared with the golden sands and blue seas of *RRR*. Here it's a lustrous grey, like Lake and stone with seemingly no let-up throughout. Namco have combined various terrains to make up the circuits, the major influences being Mediterranean island swoops and curves, and steep city climbs and drops à la San Francisco. Think *Seventies* cop film *Bullitt* with Steve McQueen. And imagine Steve bouncing over the brow of the hill, his bumper thwacking the road – you get to do stuff like this. And so although the courses might not look as bright and breezy, there's certainly more variety within, areas where it's like a four-lane motorway and sections where it's nigh on impossible to overtake. High, banked turns, hairpin bends, flyovers and underpasses, single lane bridges – yes, the circuits are splendid.

But it's the aforementioned Grand Prix section of *Rage* where the game comes into its own. You get three circuits to hurtle along but you can only start with the lowly 'Grade' car which has the worst acceleration and top speed of all the motors available. Like the previous incarnations, you start at the rear of the grid and if you can earn a top three placing, you gain a number of credits. Said tokens can then be used to upgrade to better cars or tune-up the one you've got. However, you need to emerge victorious in a good few races before you can save enough to do this.

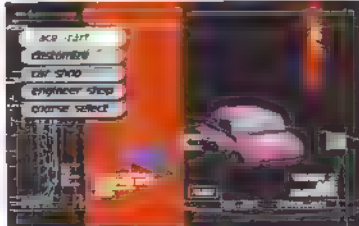
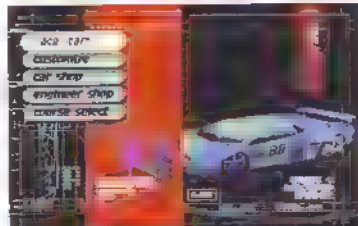
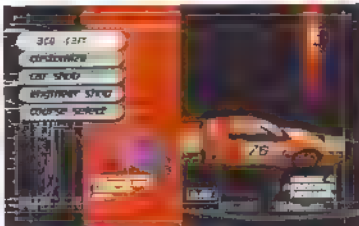
The Grand Prix is made up of five classes and to move up a class, you have to finish in the top three positions on each circuit. As you advance through the classes, so the AI opponents become increasingly sappy, bobbing and weaving to try and arrest your overtaking manoeuvres. When you've slipped up the first couple

of classes, you have to race an extra circuit, the oval, which is an out-and-out speed experience and frightfully tough, too. And by this juncture, you'll have needed to upgrade to one of the faster cars in order to have any chance of progressing further. Indeed *Rage Racer* is one of the very few games where learning to race the cars using the manual gear option is an absolute must. And there's more.

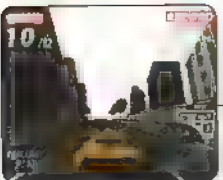
After you've completed the five classes, you get an extra GP course followed by a further five classes, only with the tracks in reverse and opponents who drive like the devil. So much more here, then, than the older *Ridge* brothers. In many cases, you find yourself re-racing circuits you've already won simply



You call the tune



Rage Racer is not only one of the very few games where you'll need to learn to drive using manual gears; it also has an upgrade and tune-up facility which is vital if you wish to progress to the later stages.

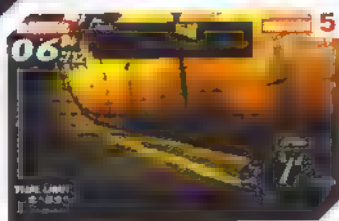


[1] Not far from the finish, now. If you can take the last bend... [2] The 'out car' view.

Rage Racer



[1] After the opening straight, the course winds up into the mountains through an Italian-style cobbled street. [2] The Gnade is the bog standard motor you start off with. It'll get you through a few races and you should be able to save enough cash to buy a new car. [3] This bit is like the car chase in *Bullitt*. [4] The bowl challenge is all about speed. [5] Zoom through tunnels.



because you need the prize money to upgrade before moving up to the next class. Namco's clearly thought out gameplan for *Rage Racer* works a treat, for this is no sequel, rather a new game entirely with the best bits of the others pilfered.

Each of the cars is more suited to certain situations. Tune-up the Mini a couple of times and it goes like the wind, with superb, tight control, but take it on to the oval course and you'll finish as an also-ran. There are 10 cars in all, with three extra vehicles 'hidden' away. Cars such as the Renault Five Turbo, Corvette Stingray, pickup truck and some wicked sports cars. You can even customise the cars for your delectation, choosing from a wide range of colours. There's also an option to physically draw your own logo for the bonnet which can be saved on

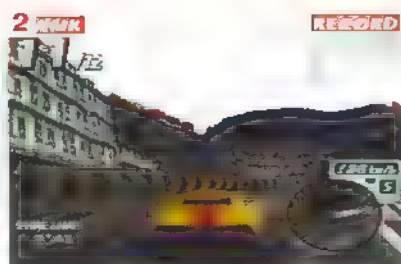


[Namco's clearly thought out gameplan]

[best bits of the others pilfered]

to a memory card.

Once again, Namco have shown that they have few peers when it comes to the out-and-out thrill of arcade racing. The pick up and play experience of the original *Ridge Racer* remains, only now there is more longevity because of the incentive to progress through the classes and upgrade to the fastest cars. And you also have to learn to race using manual gears for the tougher sections, particularly the later ovals where speed is of the essence. *Rage Racer* is a real blast and an essential purchase.



[1] The cars with a lot of power come into their own on the steep inclines. The smaller cars are easily caught on the hills. [2] Try and find a happy medium between power and manoeuvrability. [3] Look out for the huge drop-off, followed by a bend.

Alternatively...

<i>Rage Racer</i>	8/10	PSM
<i>Ridge Racer</i>	8/10	PSM
<i>Porsche Challenge</i>	8/10	PSM
<i>Ridge Racer Revolution</i>	8/10	PSM

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Rather grey, actually 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	Wunderbar 9
■ SOUND:	Tunes and revs 7	■ PRESENTATION:	Fashioned 8
■ LIFESPAN:	Real longevity 9	■ ORIGINALITY:	Upgrades, even 6

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Namco have returned to the drawing board and come up with the finest arcade racer on the PlayStation. A Victory for Common Sense.

9
out of 10



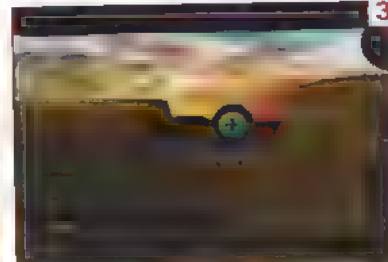
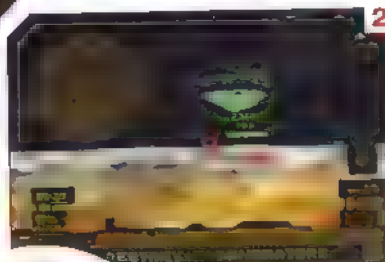
PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive **DEVELOPER:** Radical Entertainment
RELEASE DATE: Out now **ORIGIN:** United States
PRICE: £39.99 **STYLE:** Shoot 'em up

Independence Day

Do you remember the old days, when movie tie-ins were just crappy cash-ins? Well, here's proof that what goes around comes around...



(1) That's blown it. Strike one 20-mile-wide alien spaceship. **(2)** That glowy, green thing is a generator. Shoot it. **(3)** What a bonus! Pick up red cross stickers for fighter repairs. **(4)** Alien fighter stats: they're fast and agile.



Okay, so let's get this right. A most a year after the movie wows audiences across the land, Fox Interactive've decide to release the game of-the-movie. Smart move, fe as. And instead of enlisting the likes of Probe, say, which made such a cracking job of *Die Hard Trilogy*, they sign up fledgling US codeshop Radical Entertainment. Er... who? The final kick in the crotch is that instead of producing a multi-level game based on the different scenes of the movie we get a dogfighting shoot 'em up set above land but underneath the alien destroyers. Ho, and indeed, hum.

But to business: the game is spread over 13 landscapes – the Grand Canyon, Washington DC, Tokyo, Paris, New York, Las Vegas and so on – so you get slightly different graphics and slightly different missions. However the main aim on each stage is to destroy the, er, City Destroyer by taking out its primary weapon – the big pointy, glowy thing that made such short work of the Whitehouse and the Empire State building in the movie. You take on the alien fleet in one of 10 different fighters, from an F 18 to a Phantom, from an A 10 Tankbuster to a captured alien attack

craft. You only start with the one plane though, as the others are collected in the shape of tokens secreted throughout the levels. If you don't find them, once your plane is downed it's game over.

For a supposed flight combat sim, you're pretty limited as to where you can go and what you can do. You can't fly up, cos there's a bloody great spaceship hovering there. You can't fly down, obviously, because of the buildings and a planet. And if you fly too far in a straight line you reach the ship's forcefield and get bounced around. Naturally, within these limited confines you can't do any clever aerial stunts; you just swoop a bit and bank left or right, although you can perform a barrel roll. Hmph. Each mission is against the clock, so you have to be swift of wing and deft of gun. And to compensate for a lack of ammo and the constant laser bombardment there are tokens to pick up, giving you immediate repairs, extra missiles, and so on.

But all this detail is but the icing on a dog turd. The basic game is dull, tricky to control, repetitive and, unlike the movie, not much fun. Technically it's nothing to wave flags about either, with warpy textures, glitchy polygons and scenery pop-up. There are few saving graces, such as some nice *ID4* footage plus a head-to-head two-player mode, but this is more of a novelty afterthought rather than any real attempt at adding longevity. Or entertainment. Or value.

Alternatively...

<i>Thunderhawk 2</i>	8/10	PS2
<i>Starship 2000</i>	8/10	PS2
<i>Air Combat</i>	6/10	PS2
<i>Top Gun</i>	9/10	PS2
<i>Starfighter 2000</i>	6/10	PS2
<i>Independence Day</i>	4/10	PS2



The best bit of the game is the FMV clips from *ID4*. An expensive way to watch about three minutes of the film, mind. Best buy the video instead.

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Technically poor 4	GAMEPLAY:	Lock on, fire... Lock on... 4
SOUND:	Uplifting anthems 5	PRESENTATION:	Clumsy menus 4
LIFESPAN:	Short-lived shooting 4	ORIGINALITY:	A dogfighting shooter 2

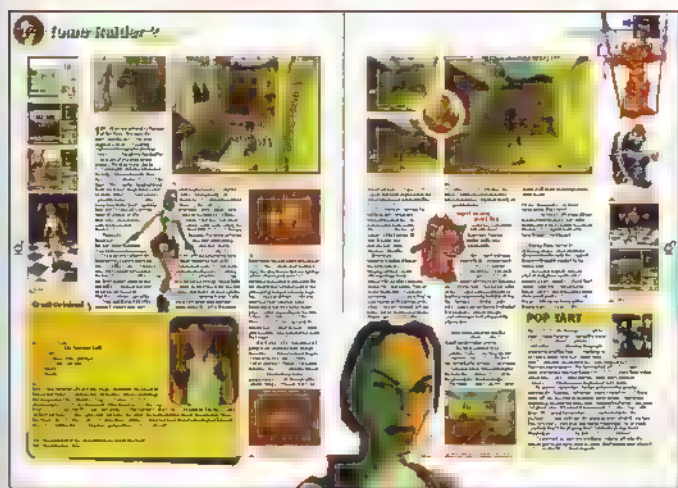
Independence Day is a game of technical ineptitude, blinkered imagination, and goat-like lifespan. What a miserably missed opportunity...

4
out of 10

THE Authority in PlayStation Gaming

PlayStation Power

Always first with the hot exclusives, this month PlayStation Power brings you the full lowdown on *Tomb Raider 2* and Psygnosis' winter '97 line up. DON'T MISS IT!

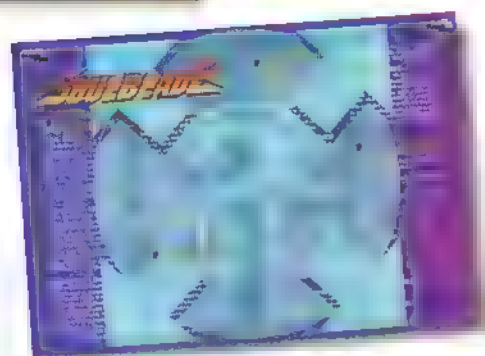


FREE!

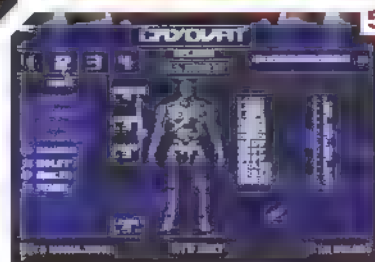
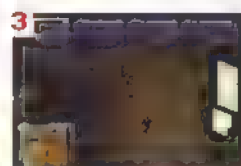
Every month PlayStation Power carries a FREE 68-page full-colour tips bible containing as many tips as the so-called tips mags!



This month it's packed with huge guides to *Soul Blade*, *Tenka* and *Exhumed* along with countless cheats and exclusive competitions!



ON SALE NOW!



[1] A firefight erupts. [2] A building collapses after an agent blows it up. Why? Because he could. [3] A man alone is easy prey. [4] Kaboom! Ha ha ha. [5] The cryostat is where you fit cybernetic enhancements.

Syndicate Wars

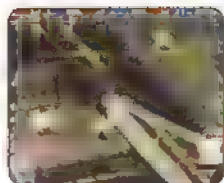
If our worst nightmares about the future come true, it'll be like this. And the only fun to be had will be in controlling your own desperate murder squad. Probably



If you've played the original *Syndicate*, we recommend you look at the screenshots here, read the panel titled 'Do you remember *Syndicate*?' and go and buy *Syndicate Wars*. Simple as that. If you've never heard of the game, or at least never played it, then read on MacDuff... we'll tell you what it's all about.

Imagine a dystopian future (that's the opposite of utopian, dummy), ruled by powerful mega global corporations – we're talking *Bladerunner*, *Aliens*, *Robocop* or *Total Recall* here. Anonymous suited businessmen participate in what is effectively a dictatorship. The masses are kept quiet by the use of the UTOPIA chip – a sinister device implanted in the brain which makes the horrid, squalid streets of the decaying inner cities seem like pleasant suburbia – and the terrifying, jack-booted police oppressors appear like village bobbies.

But then it all starts to go wrong. A previously unknown organisation, calling itself The Church of the New Epoch, releases a computer virus into the Syndicate's

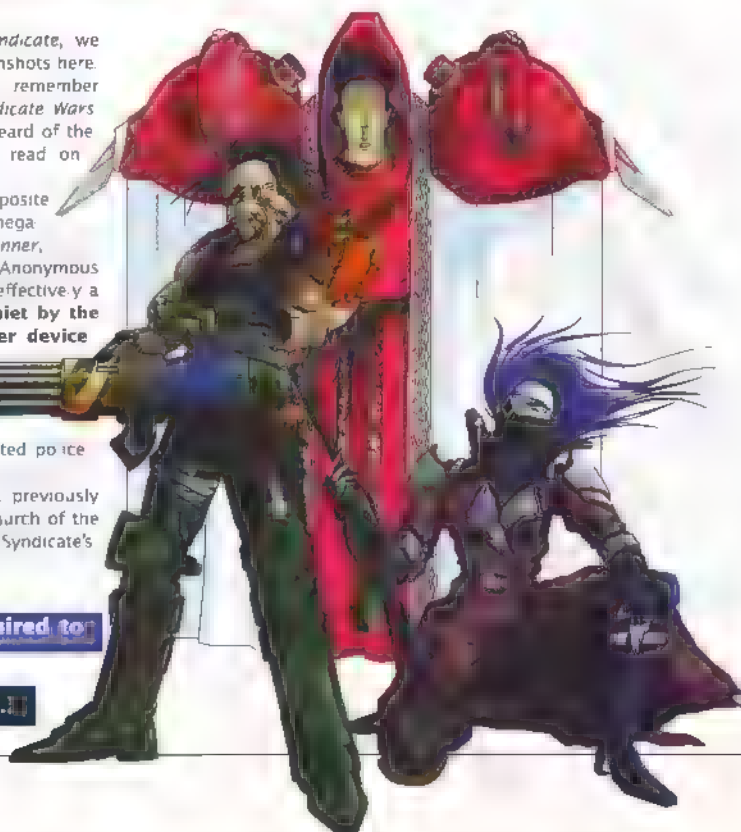


The action happens in real time and

may involve your squad being required to

assassinate a rogue agent or

steal technology from your rival.





PUBLISHER:	SCEE	DEVELOPER:	Bullfrog
RELEASE DATE:	July	ORIGIN:	UK
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Strategy action game



[1] With so much devastating firepower at your fingertips, you can't help but just loose off at passing strangers from time to time. **[2]** The aftermath of another gun fight. Shame about that building. We do hope it wasn't a library or anything...



computer network, and law and order begins to break down. Large numbers of Unguided citizens (those who have been liberated from the Syndicate's mind control by the virus) wander the streets, looting and roting churches, packed with armour-plated zealots, spring up everywhere, rival factions within the crumbling Syndicates fight openly; and the heavy-handed police struggle to maintain the old order.

Syndicate Wars pits you into this confrontation as either a newly promoted executive on the side of the Syndicate, with responsibility for restoring the status quo, or an administrator in the Church with orders to increase the disorder and bring about an armageddon.

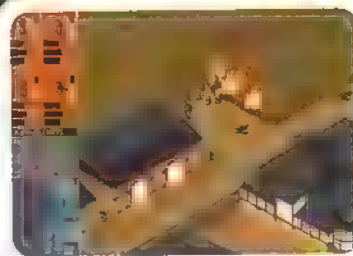
To this end, you are given control of a cadre of agents, a series of cybernetic modifications and a choice of powerful weaponry. Your agents are thrown into battle in a variety of cities around the world and you operate them via a remote drone; moving them about, pumping their veins full of psychotic drugs and mindlessly performing the orders of your superiors.



Do you remember Syndicate?



If you loved the original *Syndicate*, you'll love the new one too. It's every bit as good, but it's also totally revamped. And we're not talking about a *Star Wars*-style re-working, with one or two new bits; *SW* is a whole new game. The graphics are better, the plot's tighter, the enemies are smarter and the explosions are huge.



***Syndicate Wars* is extremely tough;**

some of the levels will take a while to master.

And liberating is extremely hard.

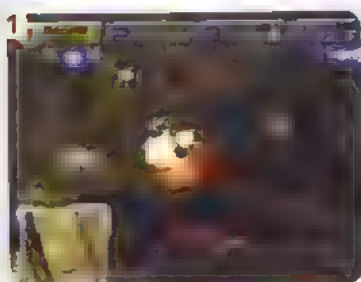
learning curve to stretch your skills.

Syndicate Wars is not a pretty game

It is, however, hugely enjoyable. Each city is basically a level, with its own mission objective. The action happens in real time and may involve your squad being required to assassinate a rogue agent, steal technology from your rival or 'persuade' an opposition agent, using your short-range, mind-control weapons. You guide your agents through the city, either singly or in teams, and engaging in running battles with the various factions, try to achieve your goal. Control is either by mouse or PlayStation controller. The controller option is a little difficult to get used to, but – as with a game like ►

Nights out on the town

There are many opportunities for mindless anarchic activity in the cities of the future. While your agents may be involved in an important mission, they will no doubt want to take some time out to rob banks [1], steal police cars [2], slaughter innocent bystanders [3] and burn trees in the park [4]. After all, what's the point of being the mindless slave of a bureaucratic despot if you can't have a little fun, too?





(1) You'll need to find some money if you're going to support your unpleasantly expensive gun habit. Robbing banks seems to be the best way. Crime is a vicious circle, isn't it? **(2)** Hanging around on a street corner will not be advisable in the near future. You'll be a drive-by shooting just waiting to happen.



► *Tomb Raider* – pretty soon you'll be using it fluently and hardly noticing the interface. Your agents can carry up to six different weapons with them, and it's in the use of these that the real strategy comes into the game. Some weapons are effective at long-range, but not very powerful. Others are so devastating that their use can put your own agents at risk. It's finding the right combination of weapons to use in any given situation that ensures success.

Your agents act semi-autonomously. They won't move without your instructions, but they will defend themselves, shooting at enemies that come into range, – especially if they've been given a drug boost – or later on in the game, when their cybernetically-enhanced brains react more speedily to danger. There are status indicators for each agent's shield, health, weapon charge, stamina and drug levels. There are two drugs you can

One of the really cool things is the way that your firepower is sufficient for you to considerably alter the city's structure.

Boom Shakala!



One of the really great things about *Syndicate Wars* is the awesome amount of firepower available to you, the humble exec. At the beginning of the game you're restricted to Uzis and Mini-Guns (sort of miniaturised gatling guns). Pretty soon, though, you'll discover the delights of long-range rifles, explosives, electron maces, lasers, thermo-nuclear grenades, laser-firing drones, plasma lances and even the ability to call laser strikes from orbital satellites. Best of all, they all make fantastic explosions. As you can see.



administer to each agent: one heightens the agent's awareness and causes them to react more quickly to potentially threatening situations, and the other turns them wildly psychotic, causing them to shoot everything in sight – very useful for when you're storming an enemy stronghold, for instance. As in real life, the use of drugs has a negative effect over time, so your agents build up a tolerance to them if they're administered too often, and their stamina levels suffer. When an agent runs out of stamina, he just stops moving; not very healthy in a hostile environment.

The game is extremely tough – some of the levels

Future shock

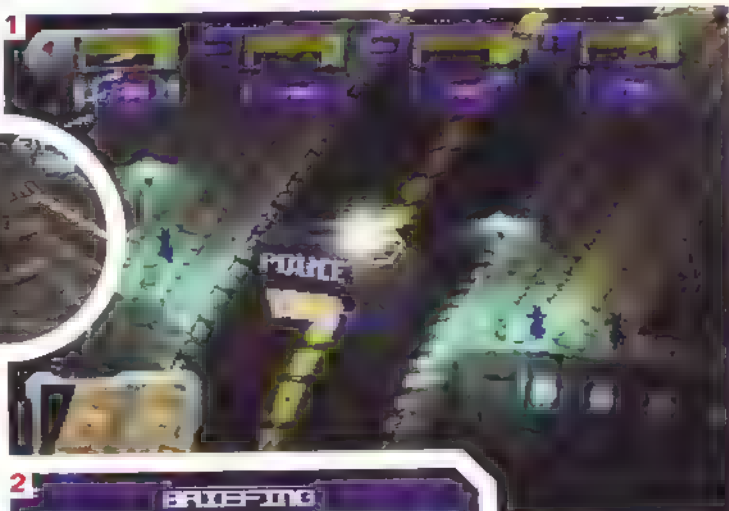
Intro



The stunning Intro tells of an ordinary night on the town for a bunch of drug-crazed, gun-toting mercenaries, hell-bent on a good time. It ends in tears.

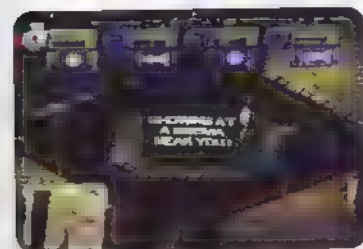
Syndicate Wars

It will take a while to master and there's an extremely sharp learning curve that will stretch your gameplaying skills to the limit. This is, of course, just as it should be. But even though some of the levels will require repeated attempts to complete, you don't really mind. And a good part of the reason for that is the way in which these future cities are so beautifully realised. Each city is like a perfect little model, complete with offices, shops, banks, video screens, streetlights, pedestrian crossings, police stations, flyovers, rapid transit systems and anti-grav vehicles. Best of all, these features are all designed extremely well, so that they present a believable vision of how cities of the future might look. And you can really get into them, initially confusing, you'll soon start to find your way around. One of the really cool things is the way that your firepower is sufficient for you to



[1] A police roadblock. We look forward to dismantling that, bit by bit. **[2] The briefing screen** tells you what the objective of each mission is. It can also contain handy clues as to the whereabouts of large amounts of cash, so be sure to read it very thoroughly.

Daz doorstep challenge



We're becoming increasingly used to advertising with n computer games, whether its advertising hoardings in football games or even entire games, like *Cool Spot*, based around advertising characters. *Syndicate Wars* takes this to new, noteworthy heights. Dotted throughout the cities are giant videoscreens which show *Manga* videos, animated *2000AD* strips and rendered sequences from Bullfrog's big new game, *Dungeon Keeper*. Whatever next?

The game isn't patronisingly easy.

It's simply gorgeous to look at, and it

has a satisfyingly dark and

sinister take on the future!

considerably alter the city's structure as well. As you progress through the game you get increasingly powerful weaponry; by the end, you'll be able to retrace your steps through the city by tracking the swathe of carnage you've left behind you. Downed anti-grav vehicles crash into the ground and leave an explosive scar across the landscape and entire buildings can be reduced to rubble, falling down in that satisfying way that demolished chimneys have of collapsing in on themselves.

Syndicate Wars is a thoroughly satisfying game that will provide you with many hours of top-quality videogame enjoyment. It isn't patronisingly easy, it's simply gorgeous to look at, and it has a satisfyingly dark and sinister take on the future. It's a game with plenty of repeat playability too: once you've finished it (which will take considerable time), you'll still feel like returning time and again to favourite levels and playing them again for their own sakes. And if that gets dull, there's always the option to link your PlayStation together with up to three friends and play any level you've already completed as a multi-player competition. It's a game for serious gamers, one which challenges your brain as much as your reflexes – and is a classic of its kind. Treat yourself to it soon.



Alternatively...

To date there is nothing to compare with *Syndicate Wars* on the PlayStation.



VERDICT

- **GRAPHICS:** Make the future come alive 9
- **GAMEPLAY:** Sublime 9
- **SOUND:** Atmosphere and big bangs 9
- **PRESENTATION:** Sweet as a nut 8
- **LIFESPAN:** Not fade away 9
- **ORIGINALITY:** Still *Syndicate*. Hooray! 7

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A superbly crafted game that will delight and entertain you. It'll also stand up to replaying for many years to come. A must-buy PlayStation game

9
out of 10

Intro



The mind-bending visuals and doom-laden music of *OverBlood*'s introductory sequence isn't really in keeping with the mood of the game itself. Unfortunately

OverBlood

Despite its multiple character control, sombre music and superb movie sequences, *OverBlood* struggles to enthrall and is too tame a contender for *Resident Evil*

[1] The freezing hibernation chamber in which you awake, with no recollection of what you're doing there. Nasty. [2] A view of it from above. [3] Don't forget your coat, dear! [4] Our hero in suspended animation. Wake up! Wake up! (Inset) Pipa, your faithful robot dog.



disappointment sets in. For a start, there's a distinct lack of monsters. Okay, some people are perfectly content to potter around, pushing switches and boxes, opening doors and generally solving mysteries; but others like the feel of a hefty bazooka in their hands and a terrifying monster in their sights, and these people should be warned that by the time you get half-way through this adventure you won't have encountered a single creature and will be armed with only a paltry laser knife.

If this is enough for you, all well and good, but be warned, too, that as mysteries go, *OverBlood* is pretty dull. It merely consists of wandering around endless corridors, visiting rooms to pick up various clues and tools in an effort to find out who and where you are and what the hell's going on. Then at the end of it all, you discover that the truth isn't that earth-shattering after all. Was it all worth the effort, you ask yourself? The adventure isn't exactly linear, either. And because some of the clues are so well hidden, and some of the

The early atmosphere of *OverBlood* is heavy and thick with tension. The stunning, rushing visuals of the introduction and its forbidding music and movie-like credits give way to a gloomy, uneasy opening scene with a pressing problem to solve: you're a man waking in a hibernation chamber in a dark, freezing room; you are also suffering from amnesia and are rapidly succumbing to exposure. As you grapple with the controls, you are forced into an immediate and desperate search for either an exit from the freezing room, or a switch for the heating. Intriguing, eh?

Unfortunately, the suspense in this game begins and ends at its beginning. After surviving the perils of the freezing room (a feat which shouldn't stretch one too much), you can begin to explore, but as you go deeper into the game, a gradual but inescapable feeling of

OverBlood merely consists of

wandering around endless corridors, visiting

rooms to pick up clues in an effort

to find out who and where you are.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS

Quite good 7 ■ GAMEPLAY

Unexciting 5

Excellent movie sequences and multi-character play are pluses in an uninspiring 3D adventure. Fans devoted to this type of game will still find much to enjoy, though.

■ SOUND

Reasonably spooky 6

■ PRESENTATION

Excellent 8

■ LIFESPAN

Two weeks at the most 5

■ ORIGINALITY

Unoriginal 4

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

6
out of 10

■ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts ■ DEVELOPER: Riverhillsoft Inc
 ■ RELEASE DATE: June ■ ORIGIN: Japan
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: 3D adventure



this gloomy opening scene is where the suspense begins and ends.



secrets to getting over obstacles so bizarre, hours spent retracing your steps through endless corridors could become days unless you're armed with a couple of tips.

The graphics aren't that brilliant by today's standards, but the animation sequences – which occur when you stumble upon some clue, or access a computer terminal – are excellent. They kick in pretty smoothly, too. There's one of these sequences near the beginning, for instance, when you find and activate a little robot. **This is Pipo. He bleeps a bit and bobs around happily like a dog, and when normal play resumes he follows you round like one, too.** Pipo is your helper and sidekick. At the touch of a shoulder button, you control Pipo instead of your man, using him to overcome all sorts of tricky situations – a feature which works really well. But don't get too attached to your new friend.

The controls generally are adequate for what the game asks of them. You can walk, jump, pick things up and change views, but you're no Lara Croft: you've got a beard, for one thing, and attempts at handstands and back flips are pointless – anything at all athletic is done during the animation sequences, unfortunately.

But that's the problem. You're not Lara Croft and this isn't *Tomb Raider*, an unfair comparison but one which will be made. It's no *Doom*, either, having a distinct lack of things to shoot, and it's no *Resident Evil*, having little sense of evil. As Paddy Ashdown might conclude, it's neither to the left or to the right of these, but somewhere in between.



Alternatively...

<i>Tomb Raider</i>	10/10	PSM3
<i>Resident Evil</i>	9/10	PSM3
<i>Final Doom</i>	9/10	PSM3
<i>Fade To Black</i>	9/10	PSM3
<i>OverBlood</i>	8/10	PSM2



[1] You have to blow up the reactor, naturally. [2] You can control Pipo at the touch of a button. Here he is, in action. [3] One of many, many corridors.

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■ PUBLISHER:

Interplay

■ DEVELOPER:

In-house

■ RELEASE DATE:

Out now

■ ORIGIN:

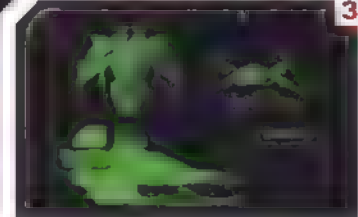
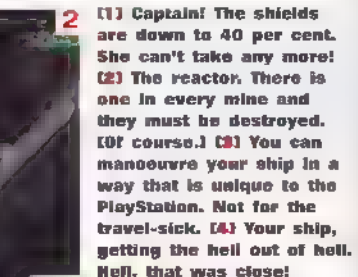
United States

■ PRICE:

£44.99

■ STYLE:

3D blaster



Descent II

Descent blasted on to the PlayStation scene a year ago, to much acclaim, and now Interplay are presenting the sequel...

Descent's brilliance lay in the way it managed to pack a whole range of genres into one game. It was a 3D shoot 'em up flight sim through the endless chambers, tunnels and levels of an alien planet. Your five year mission, to pick up strange power-ups, access keys and weaponry, rescue a bunch of hostages, blow up the reactor and escape the resulting fireball. And then fly on to your next and more difficult mission, of course. All this, and it looked great, moved smoothly, possessed a clever, instinctive control system and created addictive, edge-of-the-seat gameplay. What more could you want?

Descent II, naturally. We're here - with a few additions to its many departments. There are new missions to fly, for a start, and fans of the original would probably be content with this alone. But there's more.

One new feature is the Guide Bot. The most frightening thing about *Descent* is being lost in its labyrinthine warrens. But now, hidden near the entrance of every mine is a little blue robot which can help you in your mission. If you can find and release it, it'll fly ahead and guide you to whatever you wish to find. That is (scoff!), if you need help. The graphics are sharper and smoother, too. The mines seem more sinister than ever and the baddie robots, in particular, look mean indeed. When they sneak up on you, unseen, you turn around and are transfixed by the baleful glare of the things. They drift before you,

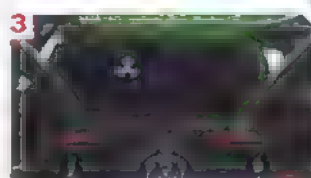
in full 3D glory, before letting you have it with both barrels. Even a veteran of many missions can sometimes allow the fear factor to affect their reaction times. But if your mission is brought to a premature end in this way, you can always try just one more flight.

If you can play into the early hours and still get up for work, *Descent II* is definitely for you.



Alternatively...

Final Doom	11/10	PSM13
Alien Trilogy	11/10	PSM5
Disruptor	11/10	PSM13
Descent	11/10	PSM1
Descent II	7/10	PSM21



(1) Get your rocks off! (2) These aliens look mean... Oh well, hasta la vista, baby. (3) The guide bot: follow him if you dare. (Inset) The planet's been blown to bits!

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Sharper, smoother 3D 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Fly-by-pants 7
■ SOUND:	Music and effects still poor 5	■ PRESENTATION:	Smart and friendly 7
■ LIFESPAN:	Hugs. Ugh... I feel sick 7	■ ORIGINALITY:	None 4

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

Veterans and rookies alike should scramble for this extremely impressive sequel of the chilling and complex all-action blaster, *Descent*.

7
out of 10

**Some magazines are
worth remembering...**



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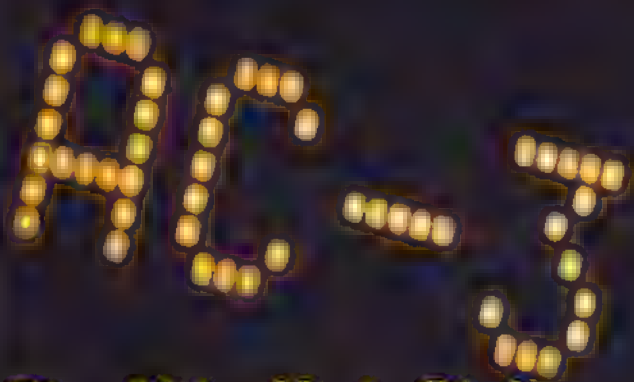
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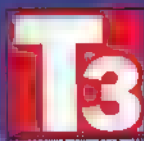
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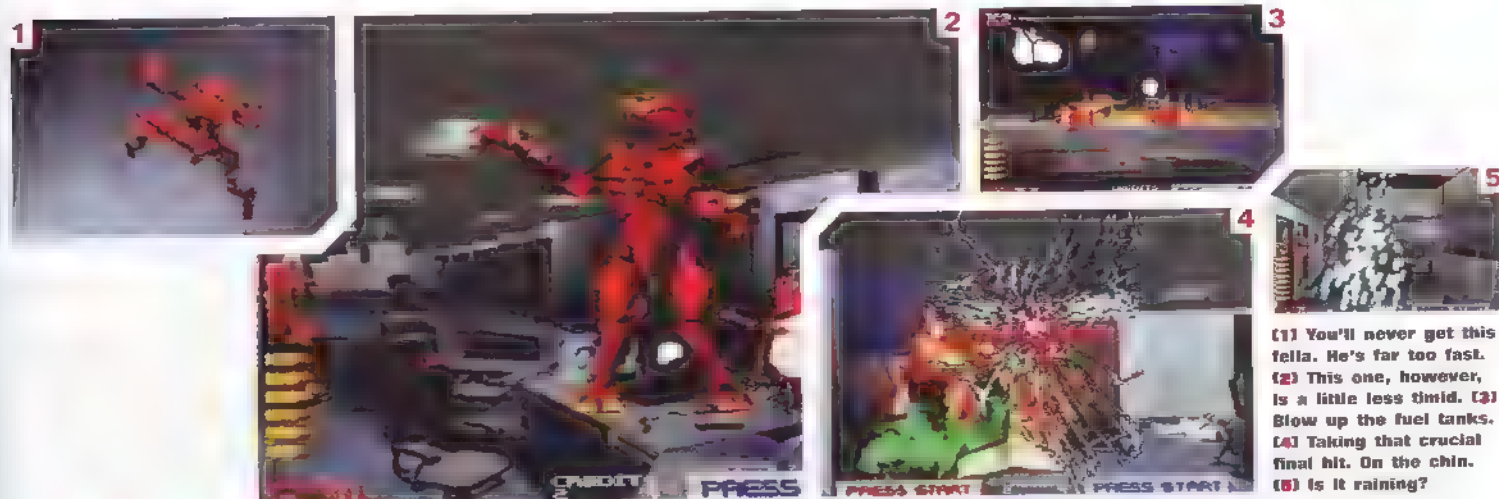
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FUTURE PUBLISHING

■ PUBLISHER: GT Interactive ■ DEVELOPER: Mesa Logic Inc.
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now ■ ORIGIN: United States
 ■ PRICE: £34.99 ■ STYLE: Shoot 'em up



PlayTest



(1) You'll never get this fella. He's far too fast.
 (2) This one, however, is a little less timid. (3) Blow up the fuel tanks.
 (4) Taking that crucial final hit. On the chin.
 (5) Is it raining?

Area 51

Standard fare for a simple shooting gallery. But you'll need to fork out an extra £30 if you want to get the best out of this one...

This is a fancy, 21st-century computerised version of a fairground shooting gallery. Taken as such, *Area 51* appears to be quite a good game, for what it's worth. And with a £30 Predator lightgun to go with it, it is. Its limitations without one, however, soon become fully apparent and the game gets boring.

Human targets of orange and green pop up in various places around the screen and start shooting at you. You manoeuvre your sighting device as maniacally as you can and fire back, reloading when empty and all the while attempting not to drop any of your blue colleagues. You'll need a gun for this. No amount of heavy handedness with the D-pad will speed up the inadequate rate at which your sights move. So if some orange bloke pops up to your left, quickly followed by a green geezer to your right, you'll need to know which one of these curiously-coloured characters means business and which one is firing blanks, as you won't hit both of them, reload or no reload. This will soon bring you to the realisation that if you want to progress through *Area 51*, you're going to have to memorise the sequence of events and be selective in your death mongering.

The two player option gives you a better chance of survival and one redeeming feature is that the usual problem that two player games have – that of not being able to go where your partner won't follow – is negated by the fact that you couldn't go where you wanted to even if you were playing on your own. This is because what initially seems to add to the playability – before

becoming apparent as the game's ultimate flaw – is the fact that all your movements around the battlefield are pre-set. You do not control your character's actions beyond shooting. This tendency of your character to charge off in different directions, without letting your trigger finger, also means that your gun will start going off all over the shop as you're unconsciously dragged to the next area of combat.

All this means that while *Area 51* starts off seeming quite fun, it inevitably gets rather tedious and very repetitive. Unless you're particularly looking for somewhere to practise your shooting gallery technique, this is a game that is best avoided.



Alternatively...

Die Hard Trilogy	12/10	PSM10
Crypt Killer	8/10	PSM10
Area 51	5/10	PSM21
Revolution X	2/10	PSM0



(1) See the mayhem I've caused? (2) It's the ones who jump up in front of your face that get you in the end.

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 21

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Better than the game 5	■ GAMEPLAY:	Weak 2
■ SOUND:	Bang! Bang! Bang! 3	■ PRESENTATION:	Strong 7
■ LIFESPAN:	You're dead 3	■ ORIGINALITY:	On the Playstation, yes 6

Not bad, but not as good as it looks. Effectively unplayable without a Predator lightgun. And it's not worth buying one just to be able to play this game.

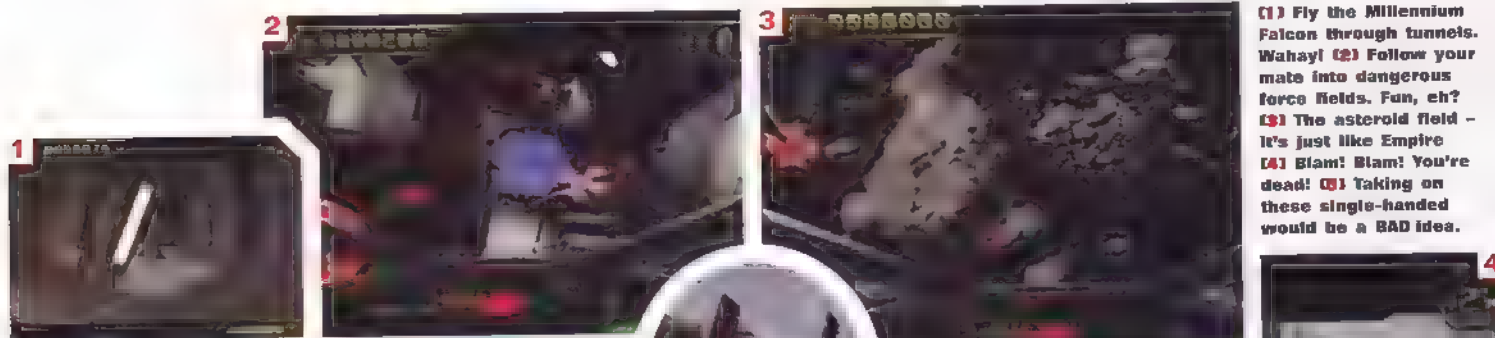
5
out of 10



PUBLISHER:	Virgin Interactive Ent.	DEVELOPER:	LucasArts
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	United States
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Shoot 'em up

Rebel Assault II

The *Star Wars* trilogy is riding high in the movie charts but is the second related PlayStation release worthy of the label?



(1) Fly the Millennium Falcon through tunnels. Wahay! (2) Follow your mate into dangerous force fields. Fun, eh? (3) The asteroid field - it's just like Empire (4) Blam! Blam! You're dead! (5) Taking on these single-handed would be a BAD idea.

What can you do in an hour and 10 minutes? You could play the best part of an entire football match. You could watch a particularly short movie. Or, if you're a reasonably good gamer, you could play through the entirety of *Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire*. And we're not talking after several weeks of practice; we're talking straight from the jewel case first go, without using any continues.

This is what happened when we came to play it. Even accounting for the several minutes worth of digital video and clever CGI graphics, which is slotted in between the 15 levels, the game took just over an hour to complete from scratch. And for £45 that's pretty bloody tame.

The game follows a remarkably similar format to the original *Rebel Assault* (some of the levels are so similar, you'd be forgiven for thinking that they'd been lifted directly from the original). Either fly Rebel ships through space, shooting TIEs, dodging asteroids and the like; or fly Rebel ships through underground complexes and space station tunnels, dodging the walls and shooting out gun turrets and force-field generators; or you control a person rather than a ship, popping away at Stormtroopers in a collection of hostile locations.

If you've played the first game on the PC, you'll be familiar with this: you get very little control over the direction of the ships you're controlling, being able to merely move the crosshairs and shoot at whatever appears on screen. This is limited gaming, in every sense of the word, and it doesn't therefore really feel like a PlayStation game, where we're used to having everything rendered on the fly and pretty well unlimited field of movement. *Rebel Assault II* is a bit of a swizz

and as a player you feel distinctly cheated by it.

Admittedly the graphics do look extremely cool - but then you'd expect them to because they're all pre-rendered. The quality of acting (there's plenty of human scenes in the cut sections) is up to scratch, and the combined movie-quality soundtrack and spot effects generate a suitably *Star Wars*-like atmosphere throughout. But you simply can't get away from the fact that this game is way, way too easy. Anything that takes you just over an hour to play is a blatant rip-off. No one wins when a game of such limited duration.

So, in a.d., this second *Star Wars* title is completely useless and a major mistake on the part of LucasArts, a company with a fantastic reputation on the PC format. They'll have to go a long way to persuade us that having the *Star Wars* label on the box means that we're in for a gaming treat. In the case of *RAII* and *Dark Forces*, it just ain't true.

Alternatively...

<i>Dark Forces</i>	5/10	PSM1
<i>Rebel Assault II</i>	2/10	PSM2

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Cool, though pre-rendered	5	GAMEPLAY:	Very limited, unfortunately	2
SOUND:	Very, very <i>Star Wars</i>	7	PRESENTATION:	As slick as the movies	8
LIFESPAN:	Ho ho ho ho ho	0	ORIGINALITY:	Seen it all before	2

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

Oh dear, oh dear. This is a mistake. *Rebel Assault II* is way too short and plays like an aged PC game, not a cutting-edge PlayStation title.

2
out of 10

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PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts DEVELOPER: Origin
 RELEASE DATE: Out now ORIGIN: United States
 PRICE: £39.99 STYLE: Adventure shoot 'em up



PlayTest

Wing Commander IV

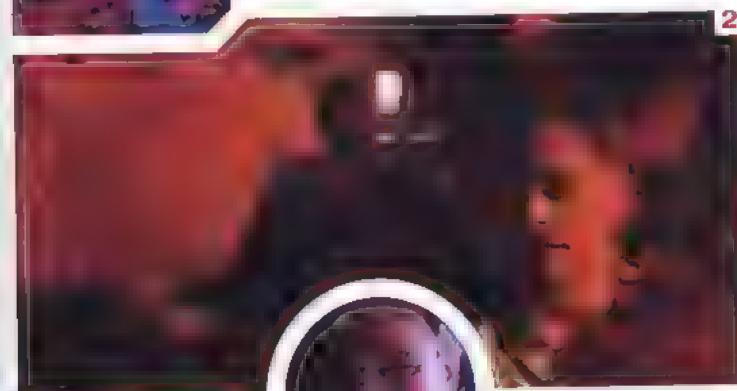
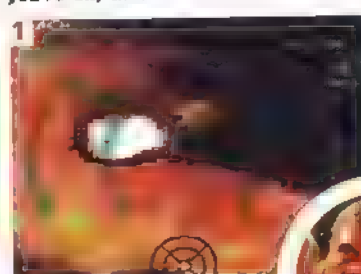
Computer-generated special effects, cosmic 3D dogfights, cheesy dialogue and Mark Hamill? Close, but no. It's the latest instalment of that other space saga...



Deep, deep space: a hospital ship and its fighter convoy ply the trade lanes, not far from the Borderworlds, when all of a sudden a number of attack craft warp out of the ether. Taken by surprise, the outgunned fighter escorts stand little chance - they're vapourised before they've even charged up the cannons. And, despite protestations and pleadings, the vulnerable, unarmed hospital ship is targeted by the leader of the renegades. An ominous disc attaches itself to the hull of the red cross vessel and, moments later in a blaze of light, all hands are lost as the crippled ship spins off into the void... And so (about 10 minutes after you've first loaded the thing) the scene is set for the next chapter in the *Wing Commander* series.

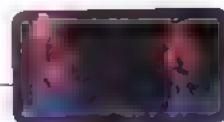
It's some years after Colonel Blair dealt the killing blow to the Kiltrathi - sworn enemies of the allied Confederation. With the war but a fading memory, Blair - played by Mark Hamill (yes, that Mark Hamill) - has taken to cultivating the land in some backwater agrarian planet. But things are amiss: he's recalled to Confed to lead a counterattack against the Borderworlds which

[1] Ah, that's what we like to see - big things in space, blowing up. [2] Scenes like these give you the option to move to different bits of the ship you're on, talk to folk and so on. Inset: Cardboard Mark gives us 'puzzled'.



are, supposedly, behind the assaults on allied convoys. But are they? And why does Captain Eisen defect. And who is the shady Confed officer Blair encountered back on his homeworld? All these questions, and more, are raised and ultimately answered in *Wing Commander IV* - a massive four-disc intergalactic romp of (nearly) epic proportions.

The game is split into three main areas of activity. There's video footage (and shedloads of it) which narrates the story. Then, occasionally, you get a sequence which requires input of 'Yes, I'll punch his lights out', 'No, I'll bottle out instead' variety. And finally there's Blair in action, where you take control of his fighter craft against enemy Borderworlders, pirates and, no doubt, ▶



Wing Commander IV is a total head banger.

with super-slick, movie-quality footage.

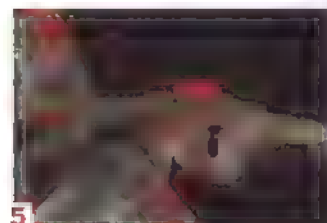
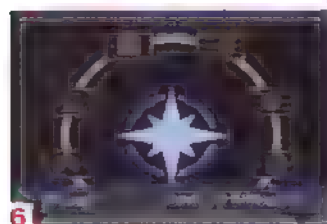
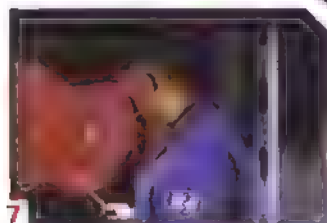
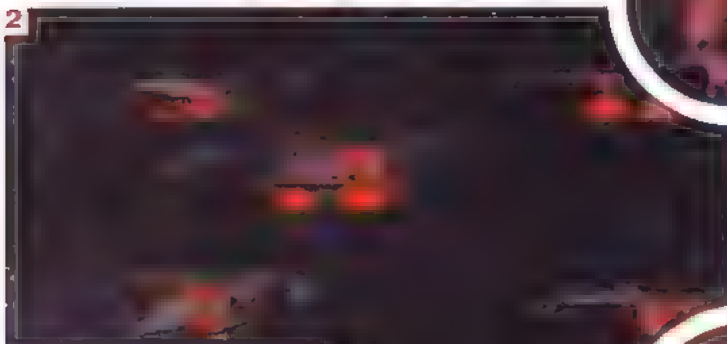
Some brilliant 3D sequences.

and a much-improved 3D combat!

[1, 2, 3] Colonel Blair decides to defect with Captain Eisen and arrives on a battered Borderworld spacestation, which is all on fire and that. [4] WCIV's improved space combat has polygon ships instead of scaled (and pixelly) sprites. [5] Kapow! Take that, empty blackness. [6] Blair's mission is displayed on the ship's 3D Map-O-Meter. It's FMV so don't get too excited. [Inset] Chubby, here, can make your ship fly faster. So he says...



PlayTest



WCIV is a really compelling game, with

plots, sub-plots and a non-linear story that,

depending on the choices you make,

can end in a multitude of ways!

► darker forces as yet unknown

You view the combat from within the cockpit of Blair's chosen fighter (Hellcat, Longbow, er, Mondeo) and have control over the ship's yaw, pitch, roll and speed. Anyone who's been brought up on the likes of *Elite* or *X-Wing* will know the score.

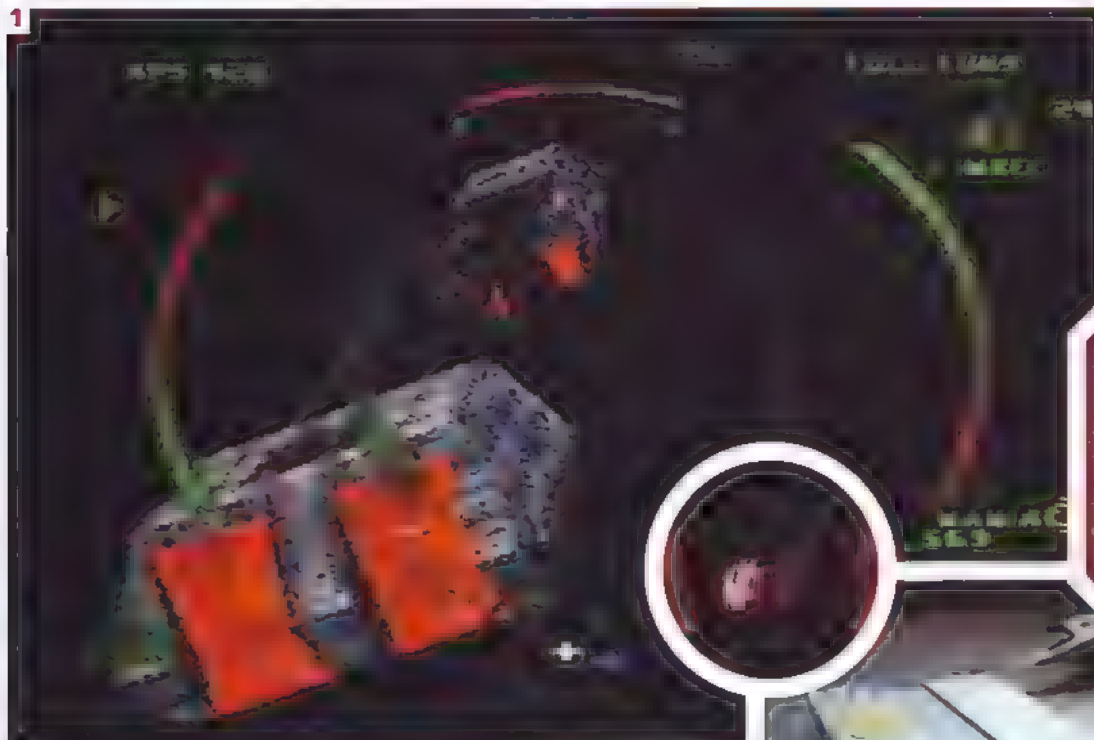
You have a substantial head-up display showing the location of enemy and friendly craft, one of which is constantly highlighted for targeting. The clever thing is that in the Arcade mode, each enemy ship has both red and green markers - the red one encircles (or, rather, ensquares) the ship, while the green one hovers some way ahead. And it's the green marker that's your real target, causing you to 'lead' the enemy as you do in Earth-bound aerial dogfights.

Obviously the storyline follows a routine of video sequence, dogfight, video sequence, dogfight, but there's enough variety in both movies and missions to keep you going. And, damn us, if it isn't top fun. *Wing Commander III* was sort of the same but the video was a bit tatty, with low-rent effects and sets, and the dogfighting sequences were just plain crap. Big pixelly sprite ships jerked about the place as you struggled to get a bead on the enemy. However, *WCIV* has moved on leaps and bounds, with super-slick, movie-quality footage, some brilliant CGI sequences and a much improved 3D combat. Out go the

(1) Before each mission you see this shot of your chosen fighter in the landing bay. This is the Longbow.

(2) Ooh! Ooh! It's the bad guys. You want to watch out for these. (3) Woah! Big thing approaching. Time to fire retros... I said, time to fire retros... RETROS!? Eject! Eject! (4) The hospital ship which is mercilessly vapourised at the start of the game. (5) The baddies' ship which does the merciless vapourising. (6) The option screen from which you access joystick controls, game set-up, a table of kills, fighter set-up, your chosen wingmen, plus memory card save games. (7) Captain Eisen explains to Colonel Blair what's wrong with his pancreas.

Wing Commander IV



[1] Although similar to a shot on the first page, this one is subtly different. [2] Defrosting deep-frozen space meals is a tricky business. [3] Hmm... Should you take the shuttle? Er, in fact your only possible option is to answer 'yes'. [4] Warping to your next combat location is accompanied by a smart polygon ship fly-past. [5] And this is a bit of FMV showing the same thing. [6] The view from the shuttle you 'decided' to take earlier. [7] Your mothership makes the hyperspace jump to the next, thrilling episode...



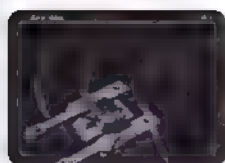
animated sprites, in comes some smart polygon fighters, destroyers and space stations.

The mixture of videogame and game video still doesn't quite meld; there's a heap of loading and re-loading and the soundtrack leaps in and out with every cut from scene to scene. But what Origin have achieved is commendable, it's taken four attempts to get there but *WCIV* is a compelling game, with plots, sub-plots and a non-linear story that, depending on the choices you make and your performance in combat, can end in a multitude of ways. For instance, when Captain Eisen defects, you must choose whether to ally yourself with the Borderworlders, or blow the cack out of him.

It's not perfect by any stretch: the space sections could still be slicker graphically, and the soundtrack (a stirring, orchestral piece) soon grows tiresome as it's repeated. And repeated. And repeated throughout successive missions. Similarly, when your wingman Maniac (the guy who plays Biff in *Back to the Future*) wastes yet another bad guy followed by 'Chalk up another to the Maniac,' for the zillionth time, you feel like firing one up his exhaust instead. So to speak.

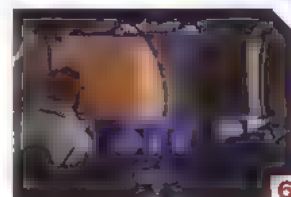
But this is small potatoes, really. *WCIV* is about the closest we've had to an interactive movie on the PlayStation, and the quality of the video – if not the acting (al these years and Mark still doesn't get it) – is spectacular. And it's in Dolby Pro Logic surround as well, home cinema fans.

It's handsome in appearance, and wealthy of option; and if you're prepared to challenge the higher difficulty settings and find the various endings, long of life, too. Probably the highest accolade we can apportion is that we'll carry on paying *WCIV*, even though we're not getting paid to. Cripes



Alternatively...

Wing Commander IV	8.10	PSM21
Wing Commander III	8.10	PSM5
Psychic Detective	6.10	PSM6
8	4/10	PSM3



Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 20

■ GRAPHICS: Top video and classy 3D 8	■ GAMEPLAY: Shooting and subterfuge 8
■ SOUND: Good but repetitive 6	■ PRESENTATION: Disc interruptions 7
■ LIFESPAN: Four discs plus repeat play 8	■ ORIGINALITY: Fourth in the series? 3

A good-looking game that's almost breathtaking in its scope; about as close to being IN a science fiction movie as you can get on the PlayStation.

8
out of 10

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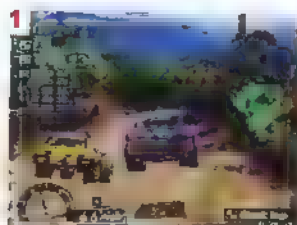
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The Band, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, UK

■ PUBLISHER:	Sony Computer Ent.	■ DEVELOPER:	SCEA
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Racing game

Playtest

Rally Cross

A far call from the sport dominated by drivers with strange names, this is the sort of rally you'd expect if you filled the tyres with too much air...

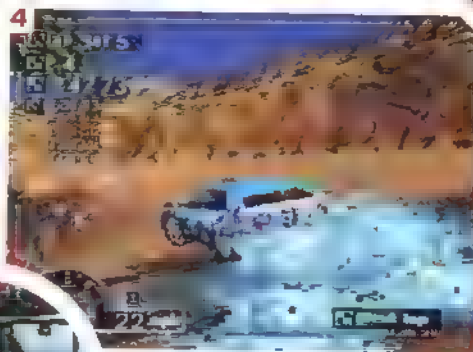


Coming from Sony Computer Entertainment America, you may well ask yourself, 'What the hell do Yanks know about rally cross?' And after half an hour of heart-palpitating hair-rendering frustration, you'll probably come back with the answer, 'bugger all'.

This isn't the rallying you've seen on TV, with high-powered production saloons haring across Sutton park and power-sliding gracefully round hairpin bends. The American coders have obviously taken elements of the Eurocentric sport and spiced it up for the US market. Yes, it's still all about racing across country, but this is more like *Ridge Racer* meets *Crash Bandicoot*.

The game gives you the chance to scream around a series of circuits in order to secure a placing and points. You receive 100 points for finishing first and 25 for finishing fourth (or 'last', in this case), and then it's on to the next race in the season. *Rally Cross* starts off in 'Rookie' mode, where you compete on three courses driven the right way round, and then back to front, for six races in all. And in the unlikely event that you manage to get more points than the three computer-controlled (and therefore insanely good) cars, then you win the season and move up to 'Veteran' mode.

For your pains, Veteran mode proffers a new course – the slippery-sleazy Alpine ice level – and tweaks the other three courses,



(1) Not the ideal way to drive a car. Cars are designed to have four wheels on the ground at once. (2) 'The red car and the blue car had a race!' (I know, like in the Milky Way advert). (3) Ye-haa! We got ourselves a convoy! (4) Splish! (Inset) This is your view of the starting grid – behind everyone else. Hmph.



removing shortcuts, adding diversions and chucking in more mud. Should your driving attain God-like excellence, then you might even move on to Expert mode with, possibly, yet another new course. We say possibly because *Rally Cross* is so indescribably hard that the odds of this humble reviewer reaching it are somewhere up in roll-over lottery winning figures. There are two courses yet to be bested but we fear their secrets will remain just that.

It's not as if your scribe is some sort of gaming sponge – having destroyed every possible course variation in *Ridge Racer* and for whom the likes of *Need For* ▶



The slippery-sleazy ice level makes negotiating the twisting mountain courses all the more aggravating. Though it's not as slippery as you'd expect. Nor sleazy, come to think of it.



Rally Cross is so indescribably hard

that the odds of this humble reviewer

reaching Expert mode are somewhere

up in roll-over lottery winning figures.

Play Test

Which car?



Just a selection of the many, many (many) rally cars on offer. In this game, speed is not always the best thing to choose if it means losing out in the handling stakes.



(1) In the Alpine course your car kicks up a fine mist of snow and ice. Or possibly just nasty fumes. (2) This odd view is that from your car when it goes over an enormous jump. Imagine landing moments later with a horrible grinding sound and you'll get the idea. (Inset) Another car.



► *Speed*, *Porsche Challenge* or *Wipeout* hold little fear. But, by Neptune's beard, is *Rally Cross* frustrating.

Far from the foot down, power-sliding romp of *Ridge* (this reviewer's favourite by far), *Rally Cross* takes place on the sort of roads you might find in the Outer Hebrides... or the moon.

Full of dunes, dips, hillocks and gullies, you end up bouncing around all over the shop, desperately trying to keep all four wheels on the ground, and fearing that you'll hurtle right out of the circuit. More often than not, you'll catch a bad curve, or tap the brake at the wrong moment, causing the car to fly end over end and land on its roof. You then have to press the lower L or R buttons to rock the car back on to its wheels, which takes vital seconds. And if you get it wrong (it's a matter of timing to rock the car properly), you may as well give up and start again, 'cos you'll never catch the others.

Then there's the actual handling of the cars, which suffer most horribly from understeer: you're constantly battling with the Joypad to make the car turn corners, and then as soon as it does, you have to put on opposite lock to avoid slamming into the other side of the road. For the first few races you end up flailing along the road, bouncing off the kerb, gnashing your teeth and, ultimately, giving yourself a really sore thumb.

It took two solid nights of play to move off Rookie level, and that's using years of game-playing guile plus a fair amount of cheating to do it. For instance (top tip coming up), the physics of the car are slightly different when using the in-car view, which means that you can take corners just a bit more smoothly. Also, you can elbow your way through the pack more effectively using the cockpit view, since the computer's not quite sure where the edges of the car are. Use one of the three external views, though, and you'll have problems squeezing past. Well, it worked in this case, anyway.

In a stroke of maddening impracticality SCEA have chosen to make *Rally Cross* entirely dependent on the memory card. If you haven't got one, of course you can't save your record lap times; but worse, you can't save your season standing and therefore cannot hold on to your 'Veteran' or 'Expert' rating. In all honesty, how difficult would it be to have a password entry so you can play on the higher levels? Not everybody can afford a memory card.

If you get bored of losing to the computer cars you can always have a head-to-head with a mate, using the split-screen mode. And, for top beered up Friday night laffs, there's a four player split-screen mode (à la *Mario Kart*. Ahem). SCEA are to be commended for instigating the one screen, multi player mode, and although it jerks along like a Harryhausen dinosaur, it's still one of the best (er, on y?) uses for Sony's multitap.

There are also different sorts of races, so you can

On the rocks



The one-screen, multiplayer mode

jerks along like a Harryhausen dinosaur,

but it's still one of the

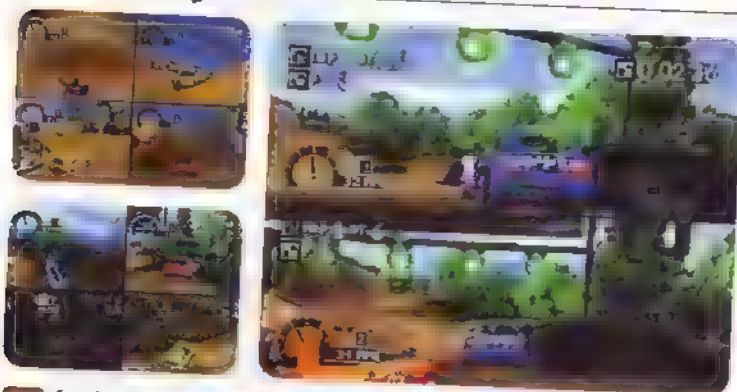
best uses for Sony's multi-tap

Like we said, there's a lot of bouncing around going on in *Rally Cross*, which occasionally results in you ending upside on your roof. In this instance, you have to press the R or L shoulder pads to gently rock the car back on to its wheels. Which always takes far longer than you bloody well want it to, leaving everyone else to whizz past...



Rally Cross

Fourplay



L If you've seen the four-player action in Nintendo's *Mario Kart* and wondered why the PlayStation doesn't do it, well, now it does. *Rally Cross* has a smart four-player race mode, where you each take a corner of the screen. It's a bit jerky, but what the hell - it works. Failing that, just plug in a second joystick for instant two-player fun.



practise a course (though only the ones you've earned the right to race on), play in head-on mode (where you're racing the wrong way against a single opponent) or in suicide mode where you compete head-on against the other three competitors.

Sadly, the various racing modes offer little more than novelty value, and the two player head-to-head mode doesn't allow you to take on the computer cars, so each race is just that little bit less exciting. So you need to buy a memory card AND a multitap, then!

Racing *Rally Cross* is quite tricky by the end of the first infuriating session this reviewer loathed this



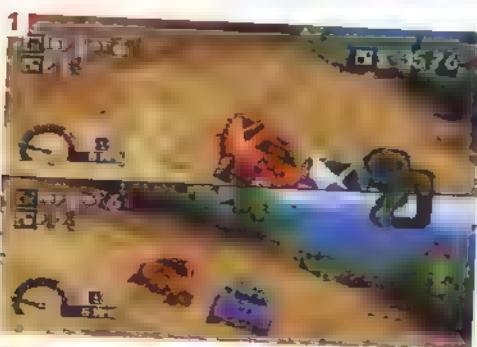
little cartoony perhaps) and it is, if

wretched piece of software with every ounce of energy he could muster. But with time, it was possible to progress and tame the beast slightly. And now... well, it's sort of likeable. The graphics are exceptional (though a little cartoony) and it is a solid challenge. The only reservation we have is that many people might buy the game on looks alone, and really struggle with it. In fact, the very first course you race on is a swine and it takes a real effort to move up the rankings.

Rally Cross is certainly above average, but peaks well below its potential. With a little thought and a few more game tweaking options, it could have been a real classic.

Alternatively...

V-Rally	8/10	PSM1
Wipeout 2097	8/10	PSM1/2
Knight Rider Revolution	8/10	PSM1
Porsche Challenge	8/10	PSM1/2
Motor Toad GP2	8/10	PSM1/2
<i>Rally Cross</i>	7/10	PSM1
Need For Speed 2	6/10	PSM2



[1] Split-screen, one-on-one action. [2] 'Suicide' mode. You race one way while everyone else goes the other. [3] Ah, the billowing palm fronds... [4] Tunnels are like magician's wands: light at both ends and dark in the middle.

VERDICT

- GRAPHICS: Almost cartoony 3D 8
- SOUND: Great FX, dreadful metal muzak 5
- LIFESPAN: Six courses plus multiplayer 7
- GAMEPLAY: Frustrating racing 6
- PRESENTATION: Tidy, but no passcodes 7
- ORIGINALITY: Racing with ups & downs 5

Rally Cross? Really Cross, more like... Almost brilliant, but spoiled by a high frustration level and some odd foibles. A solid challenge... Perhaps too solid.

7

out of 10

PlayTest

Intro

As per usual, the game begins with a pre-rendered intro. It isn't one of the best but it's not bad, either. Little did you know, when you shot into the

Darklight Conflict

The battle for the skies of the future continues.

This time it's Electronic Arts who are waging their war.

And somebody's switched all the lights out...

1 (1) There's a huge choice of weapons. They all look excellent as they blast the cockpit. (2) The action can get very frenetic in the middle of the battle, with little slow-down. Quite impressive, wouldn't you say?

With a plot line mimicking a classic *Star Trek* episode, *Darklight Conflict* comes on to the PlayStation in the enviable position of being the first space-based shoot 'em up in what looks like being this year's favoured genre.

After thousands of years of bloody warring between their planets, the Ovons and Repton elders developed a computer system to play out their battles for them, thus ending the genocide. But while this worked for a while, the computers soon earned to second guess one another and the war became a series of stalemates. Now, in a desperate attempt to gain the upper hand, the Ovons have begun to abduct

species from non-encounter planets, 'modifying' them to pilot their assault crafts, relying on speed of thought and natural instincts no computer could match.

You play one such pilot. Beamed on board a mysterious alien craft midway through a mission, you are forced to fight the Repton forces if you are to have any chance of being returned to Earth.

And thus the game begins, with you being taken through 10 progressive training missions. Although the first few are simple enough – most only need you to fly through a couple of hoops, shoot some remote drods and head back to the flagship – they soon become tough when your masters add captured Repton craft to your training. Once you've successfully completed the training period, you're then transferred to the battle-front to serve on the War Drum. And this is where things start to get difficult.

If you don't fancy working your way through each level, or just prefer a quick blast, you can opt for the Arcade game in which you face

If you don't fancy working your

way through each level, or just prefer

a quick blast, you can opt for the Arcade

game in which you destroy alien craft.

Space: above and beyond



(1) The in-cockpit view has a great head-up display. (2) This view always puts you directly behind your target. (3) The naif view. Best avoided, really.



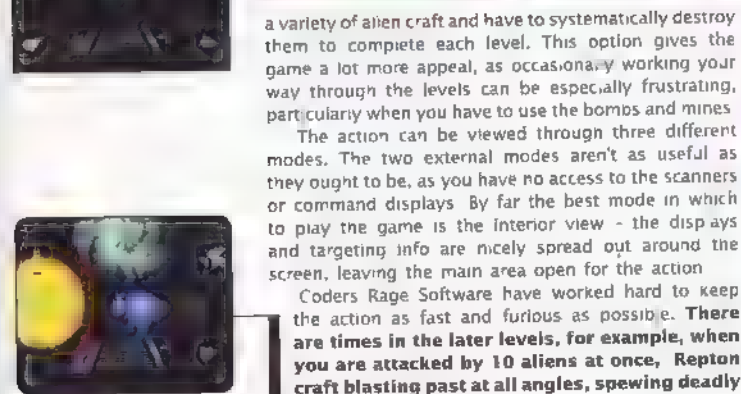
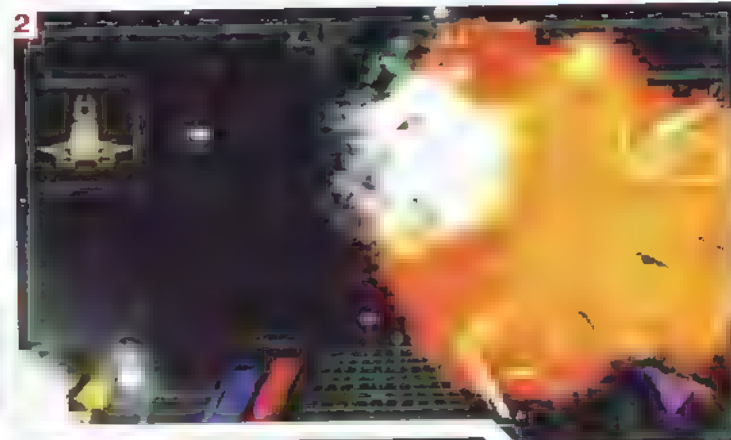
■ PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	■ DEVELOPER:	Rage Software
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Space shoot 'em up



to destroy the intruder, that you would be kidnapped by a band of desperate aliens, searching the galaxy for hotshot pilots to help them in their war.



(1) Occasionally a worm-hole has a series of blue and orange energy orbs. (2) *Darklight* has some great explosions. (3) To finish each level you have to dock with the warship - it's harder than it looks. (4) A map. (5) The detail on the craft never fails to impress even right up close.

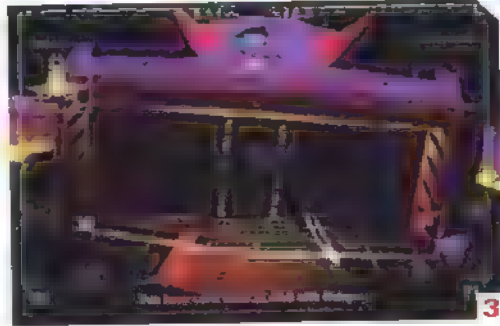


a variety of alien craft and have to systematically destroy them to complete each level. This option gives the game a lot more appeal, as occasionally working your way through the levels can be especially frustrating, particularly when you have to use the bombs and mines.

The action can be viewed through three different modes. The two external modes aren't as useful as they ought to be, as you have no access to the scanners or command displays. By far the best mode in which to play the game is the interior view - the displays and targeting info are nicely spread out around the screen, leaving the main area open for the action.

Coders Rage Software have worked hard to keep the action as fast and furious as possible. There are times in the later levels, for example, when you are attacked by 10 aliens at once, Repton craft blasting past at all angles, spewing deadly laser fire as they go.

Thankfully the graphics manage to avoid looking like every other sci-fi game, presenting yellow and purple craft instead of the usual dull greys. (They look better than they sound, honest.) The sound effects are adequate enough - linked up to a decent hi-fi, the low tones of the crafts exploding or flying past sound fantastic - but a little music, to add to the atmosphere, wouldn't go amiss. About the only gripe we could pick



Darklight Conflict is a solid title

It's a stripped-down version of that superlative space strategy/combat game, *Elite*

with this game was the dreadful loading times. With some of the levels lasting a few seconds, four or five minutes loading time is an awfully long time to wait, in our opinion.

All in all *Darklight Conflict* is a solid game which manages to avoid exceeding the frustration boundaries, and indeed there's nothing like it on the PlayStation. It almost feels like a stripped-down version of that superlative space strategy/combat game, *Elite*, and anything that does that is bound to be a winner. If you're a devotee of space shooters, with the odd strategy element thrown in, give *Darklight Conflict* a try.

Alternatively...

<i>Darklight Conflict</i>	8/10	PSM2
<i>Wing Commander II</i>	8/10	PSMS
<i>Novestorm</i>	3/10	PSM2



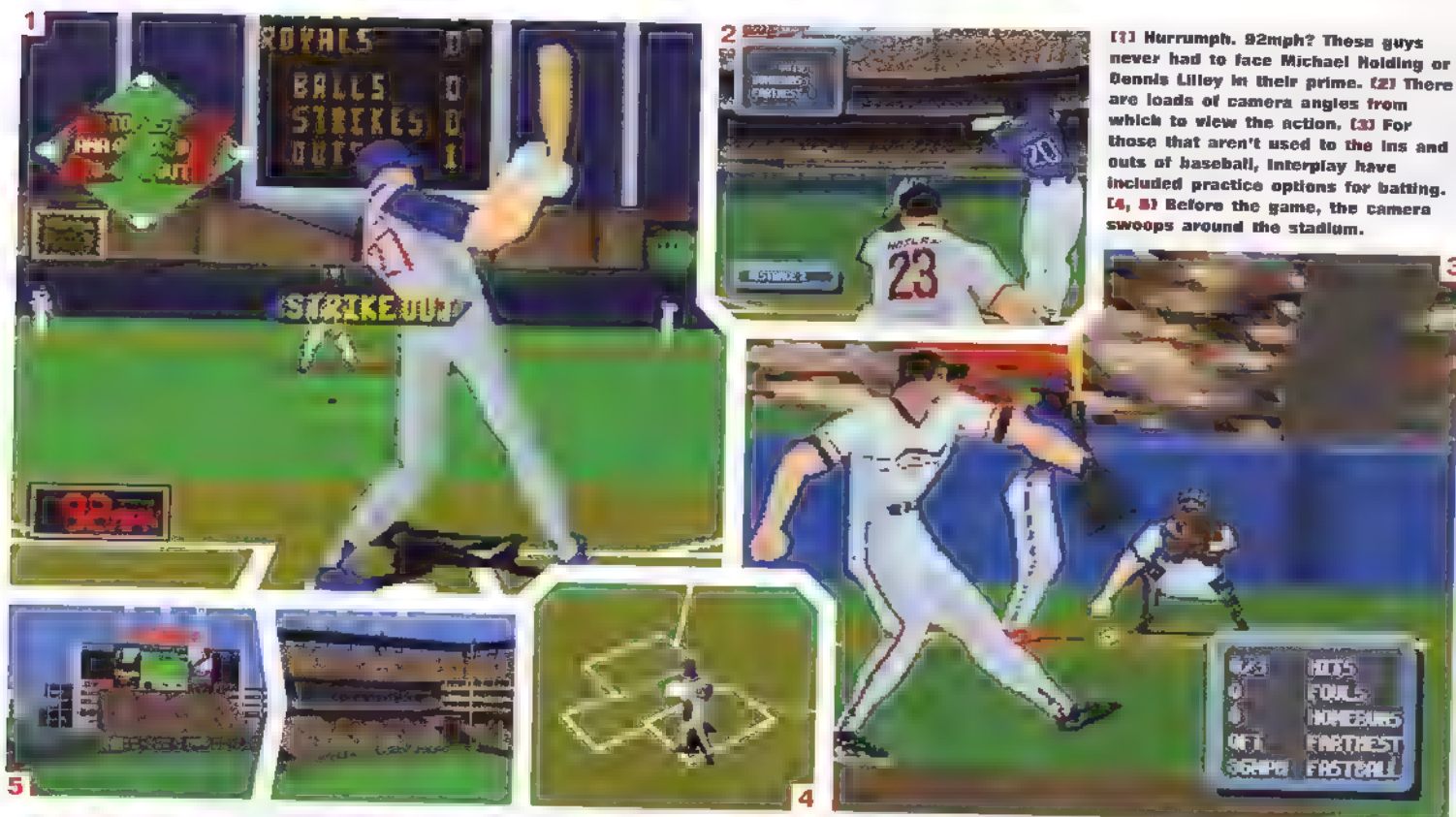
(1) Expect to see lots of big spaceships. (2) Approaching the wormhole. (3) Once you pass the training missions you'll be transferred to the War Drum.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Original and different 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Plenty of fun 8
■ SOUND:	Decent but limited 8	■ PRESENTATION:	Crappy loading times 6
■ LIFESPAN:	Loads of levels 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	Nothing else like it 8

A decent *Wing Commander*-style space strategy this isn't, but *Darklight Conflict* is a satisfying 3D space blaster nevertheless. Worth a shot in the dark.

PlayTest



[1] Hurrumph. 92mph? These guys never had to face Michael Holding or Dennis Lilley in their prime. [2] There are loads of camera angles from which to view the action. [3] For those that aren't used to the ins and outs of baseball, Interplay have included practice options for batting. [4, 5] Before the game, the camera swoops around the stadium.

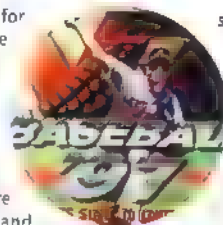
VR Baseball '97

It's been advertised as, 'The only real-time, 360 degree, 3D baseball game'.

But is it any good? In the bottom of the ninth and with all the bases loaded PSM take a swing at it...

It's another disappointment for baseball supporters, really, because while VR Baseball isn't that bad, it isn't that good, either, and no amount of cheesy organ-playing or enthusiastic cries of 'SSSTRRRIKE!' can hide this fact.

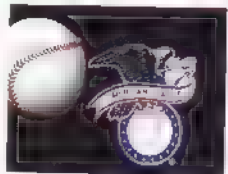
Certainly, it has some of the features you might hope for in a baseball sim (there are all the usual camera angles, player stats, and different play modes and stuff) but what it lacks is any empathy or feel for the action. Sure, you can pitch the ball. You can also change the direction, flight and



speed of the ball and mix in as many sliders and knucklers as you like. You can even warm up another pitcher in the bull pen and throw him on instead, for that matter. But no matter how many deliveries you toss, or who makes them, there is little scope to get any touch going, in most golf sims, for instance, you hit a button twice - the timing of the second hit being crucial.

Practice, as in real life, allows your swing to improve. With football sims, how long you press that X button for is all-important. But with VR Baseball it's just a case of a couple of stabs... maybe a bit of swing... and that's it. It's boring, in other words. The batting works in a similar way, too: even when you're joyfully smashing the ball over the boundary you can't get rid of a nagging sense that something is missing.

The graphics don't really endear the game, either. The pitcher and hitter appear blocky and don't really move very smoothly, or at all convincingly. Somebody's grandmother must have been dragged in for the motion



The introductory sequence whittles through a succession of team badges and baseball logos.

The graphics don't really endear

the game... Somebody's grandmother must

have been dragged in for

the motion-capture shoot



PUBLISHER: Interplay **DEVELOPER:** In-house
RELEASE DATE: July **ORIGIN:** United States
PRICE: £39.99 **STYLE:** Sports sim

A lot of possible excitement has been lost through the blatant corner-cutting.

capture shoot. And as for the fielders, they act and look more like ants than athletes.

In fact, VR cops out on the fielding completely, really. As a fielder, you will hope to catch a batter, but more often than not, you will be seeking to field and throw the ball to a base of your choice to get a runner out. Fine. But in this game, you don't actually see the runners in live action - even though the poor batting player is frantically hitting the shoulder buttons to slide on base. Oh no: you see them as little red bobs on this cheap and nasty diamond thing in the upper corner of the screen. A lot of possibly spectacular excitement has been lost through this blatant corner cutting. And those bobs: they're just so passé! Live in the now.

Though it's quite a chuckle, VR does have lots of faults. There aren't any brilliant baseball sims around yet. Hopefully there will be a few more to choose from, before long.



(1) A full-blooded pitch is winging its way towards you. (2) You can add extra players to the batting list. (3) Play a complete season. (4) Zoom into the action. (5) Backstop? Wicky?

Alternatively...

FT Big Hurt Baseball 11/10 PS98
 VR Baseball '97 5/10 PS97

Official UK PlayStation Magazine

GRAPHICS: Hardly major league 5 **GAMEPLAY:** Uninvolving 5
SOUND: Sorry. What was that? 4 **PRESENTATION:** Workmanlike 5
LIFESPAN: Suspect stamina 4 **ORIGINALITY:** Whatever next 5

A visually and emotionally unexciting game which falls some way short of the unremarkable targets set so far by other baseball sims.

5 out of 10

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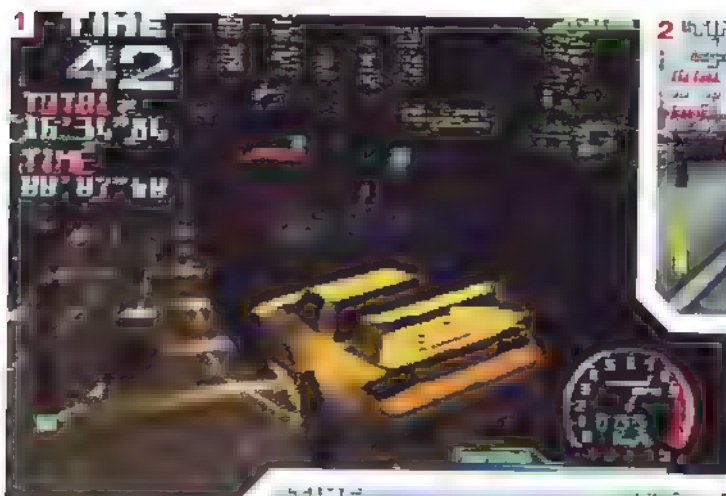
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Ray Tracer

In most racing games the slightest collision results in a spectacular collision and the 'game over' sign. But in Sony's latest car chaser you can crash to your heart's content and get points for it...



(1) The night-time track, one of the best, also one of the hardest. (2) No racing game is complete without a suspension bridge. (3) Racing through the sewers is always fun. (4) You'll need all your wits about you when you meet this baddy. (5) You can reach incredible speeds on long straights.

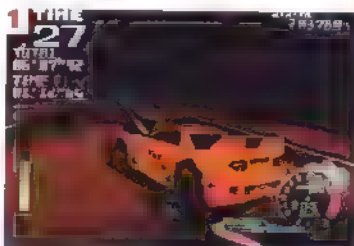


Mention *Chase HQ* to anyone in their mid-twenties and watch their eyes mist over as they remember sitting at the wheel of this arcade monster of the late '80s. It was a perfect example of arcade gameplay; all you had to do was rush down a course and smash your enemy off the road.

In *Ray Tracer*, a distant relative of *Chase HQ*, the aim of the game is as simple as its predecessor; you drive your car around a series of tracks until you find members of the Back Kaiser criminal syndicate and do your damndest to force them off the road. This would

be easy enough if you were up against simple cars, but the game's designers have gone overboard with the enemy hardware. Luckily there's a range of some very impressive vehicles to help you overcome the opposition. Featuring names like Spanker and Hawk, the cars are some of the most powerful beasts you could ever wish to drive.

In the first two levels, each car is fitted with a nitrous oxide injection which, when triggered, gives the car an incredible boost. Your only dilemma, now, is to decide how to use this. Do you boost your way to the



(1) The cars look impressive throughout the game, particularly the rear-view mirror. (2) You may not crash often but when you do, it's spectacular.

In *Chase HQ* all you had to do

Ray Tracer is just as simple...



■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ DEVELOPER:	Taito
■ RELEASE DATE:	July	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£34.99	■ STYLE:	Racing game



(1) You get loads of points for smashing other cars into oblivion but it does slow you down. (2) The familiar flare of a nitro boost.

Alternatively...

Ridge Racer Revolution	6.10	PSM
Wipeout 2057	11.10	PSM2
Destruction Derby 2	11.10	PSM3
Ray Tracer	7.10	PSM1
Impact Racing	5.10	PSM0

baddies, saving time in the process, or should you keep it in reserve until reach your quarry and use it to smash into them?

After working your way through all six tracks you finally meet up with Top Baddy himself. Looking like a reject from a *Power Rangers* episode, he drives an incredibly fast car through the night-time streets of Tokyo and proves to be very evasive indeed.

One of the main problems we found with the game was its learning curve. Set on Normal, it was quite easy to get to the final level after a few plays. But

Put the game on to the hardest level

your nitro injection disappears and the handling becomes much more difficult

once you reach the final boss it proves near-impossible to complete with the slightest bump putting your quarry out of reach. Put the game on to the hardest level and it becomes a whole new prospect as your nitro injection disappears and the handling becomes much more difficult.

The game certainly looks and feels like an early Nineties arcade game. The car has just the right look and the handling is spot-on. Ta to have obviously gone for a super-speedy, 'arcade' feel and this works well as it makes the game look and play incredibly fast. The sound isn't quite as impressive as the graphics, but it complements the game nicely with growling engine sounds and throwaway techno beats.

Ray Tracer would make a fine arcade game but as a PlayStation title we have our reservations. It's probably not worth spending £45 for something that might last only a couple of days. As a rental game though, it's wonderful.



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Very fast indeed 9	■ GAMEPLAY:	Simple but effective 8
■ SOUND:	Very throaty. Nice 8	■ PRESENTATION:	A little disappointing 5
■ LIFESPAN:	Unfortunately, far too short 4	■ ORIGINALITY:	Are you kidding?! 3

A good but limited racing game which could benefit from a couple more tracks and a steeper learning curve. As it is, *Ray Tracer* is a blast for a few hours.

7
out of 10

Official UK
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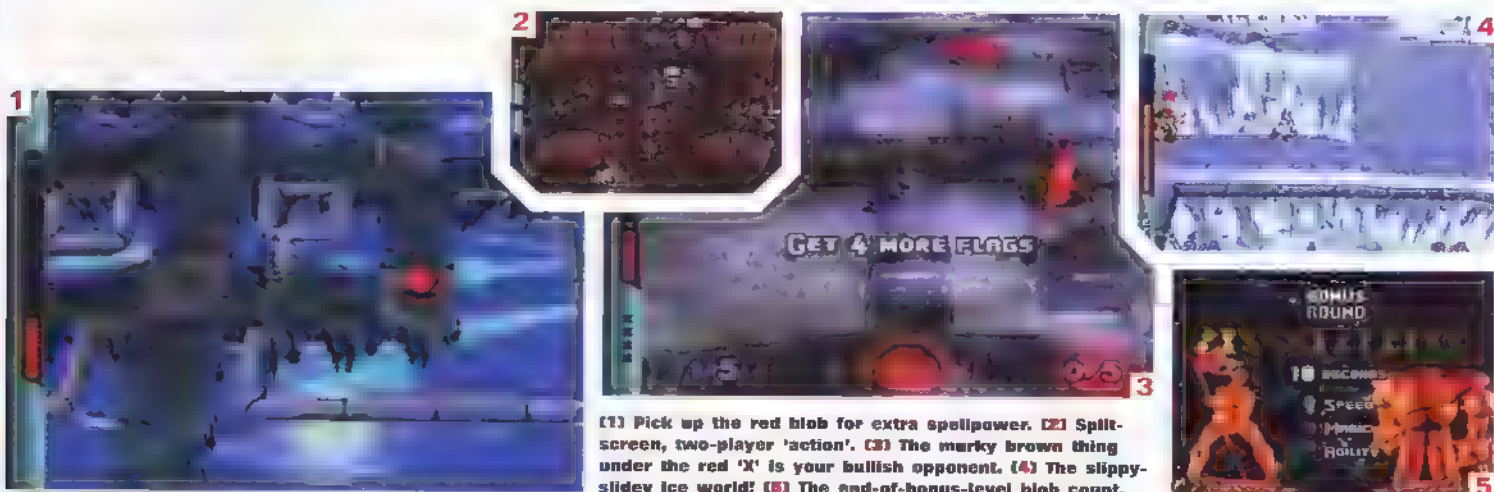
Con Air: this year's all-action answer to *The Rock*.
Gridlock'd: Tim Roth and Tupac in the Yankee *Trainspotting*.
So you wanna be a stuntman? Our man learns the ropes...

It's all in Total Film 6. On sale Thursday 5 June

■ PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive ■ DEVELOPER: Radical Entertainment
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now ■ ORIGIN: United States
 ■ PRICE: £39.99 ■ STYLE: Maze chase game



PlayTest



(1) Pick up the red blob for extra spellpower. (2) Split-screen, two-player 'action'. (3) The murky brown thing under the red 'X' is your bullish opponent. (4) The slippery-slidey ice world! (5) The end-of-bonus-level blob count.

Grid Run

Take away the fancy 3D dressing and what's left of this maze-based, hide-and-seek game is bland and uninspiring fare

Another title lands on the PSM desks, fu y clothed and jewel case clad, so ill omens abound. And sure enough, *Grid Run* turns out to be one more example of the shovelware that's gradually bringing the PlayStation into disrepute. What we have here is a 3D amalgam of tag, hide-and-seek, *Pac-Man* and the two-player 'capture the flag' game, *Return Fire*. You play against an opponent (computer or human) on a maze-like grid in which the first player to collect six flags is the winner. When the level starts, it's a race to touch the first white flag which then turns to your colour; if you don't, you're 'it' and have to pursue your opponent and tag them. Then it's your turn to colour-code the flags – including ones which your adversary may have already claimed for himself... itself... whatever.

There are bonuses to pick up and spells to unleash upon the enemy, but we're basically talking high-tech tactical tag (which is ironic, given that the US codeshop responsible go by the name of 'Radical Entertainment'). Sorry, fellas, but radical this ain't.

Each group of three levels is themed, so in one-player mode you'll meet Krosh on the arid planet of Solaria, Krayken on the watery levels of Aquar IV and – surprise, surprise, *Kolo* on the slippery-slidey ice world, Galacia. Your alien adversaries have different characteristics, so one may be slow but sneaky, another fast but dim. In two-player split-screen mode, you simply select which planet takes your fancy – some are more fun than others to negotiate.

Clear all the levels on a planet and you get to hurtle round a bonus level to stock up your stash of spellpower

– speed, missiles, teleports, mines, and so on. You're then rewarded with a passcode, or you can just save the data to your memory card. And that's it in a nutshell.

Admittedly, it's all too easy to dismiss *Grid Run* for its simplistic design and grass-roots gameplay, which would be wrong. There are moments of high tension as the computer – or, preferably, human player – homes in on your desperate, flailing character. And true, with 59 levels plus the head-to-head option, you may be rewarded with a few evenings of simple gaming pleasure. But, let's face it, this isn't what we bought PlayStation for. The action is terribly basic – the spells and bonuses are mere refresh on this plain salad of gameplay – and whenever you win a level, you often feel that it's more an act of chance than any real cleverness on your part.

To be honest, *Grid Run* could quite happily have been written on the Amiga; hell, take away the 3D graphics and we could almost be talking C64 budget game. When you can buy *Ridge Racer* or *Tekken* for 20 quid, who the hell would contemplate spending £40 on average fare like this?



Alternatively...

<i>Return Fire</i>	7/10	PSM10
<i>Pac-Man – Namco Vol 1</i>	7/10	PSM5
<i>Street Climber</i>	7/10	PSM13
<i>Grid Run</i>	5/10	PSM21
<i>Cyber Grid</i>	4/10	PSM2



(1) Hours of fun playing 'tag' with a friend. Or this. (2) The red flag is his – run into it to turn it blue. (3) Yikes! Big red alien thing coming your way.

Official UK
PlayStation
 Magazine 21

■ GRAPHICS: Adequate 3D mazes 5 ■ GAMEPLAY: Hide-and-seek? 4
 ■ SOUND: Dull American muzak 4 ■ PRESENTATION: Nice intro, few options 5
 ■ LIFESPAN: Levels aplenty 5 ■ ORIGINALITY: Tag meets *Pac-Man*? Nope 2

Your average, run-of-the-mill, ho-hum, common-or-garden, seen-it-before, maze-based chase game. Not especially good, not especially bad – but eminently forgettable.

4
 out of 10

TOP SECRET

The classic *Micro Machines* series finally makes it to PlayStation in three-dimensional form. The multi-player game is a dirty affair, so follow our tips if you want to oust your opposition

MICRO MACHINES V3

GENERAL HINTS

1 To get the turbo start and leave the other opponents in your dust, hit the accelerator the second that the third bleep sounds at the start. Watch out if there's a sharp corner or precipice in front of you, though.

2 It may sound pretty obvious, but learning the layout of the tracks is an integral part of becoming a *Micro Machines* champ. Keep going over the same track until you have the layout implanted firmly in your head. Next time you race the track, it'll be much more exciting as you won't be falling off everywhere.

3 In the science room levels, there are a number of substances lying around the tables. The clear substance is glue and should be avoided at all costs as it will slow you down; the red substance will turn you invisible so, again, avoid it. The green substance, however, is advantageous as it will turn you into a flaming ball, increasing your speed in the process.

4 When crossing from table to table using a ruler, you don't have to be directly in the centre of the ruler to get across safely. If you are hanging over the side of the ruler, don't try to centre yourself as you'll end up dropping off the edge.

5 Some tunnels and pipes can be driven around rather than through, so work out where it's possible to do this. Avoiding a tunnel or a pipe may save you some time as you won't have to line yourself up for it.

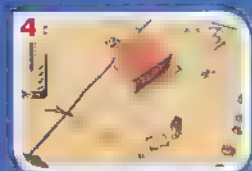
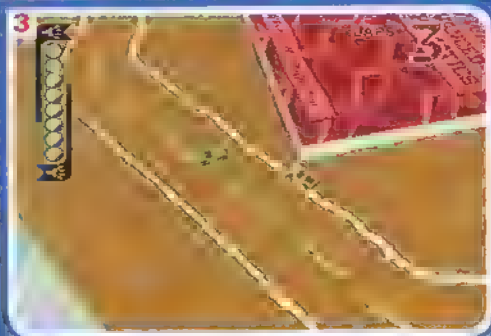
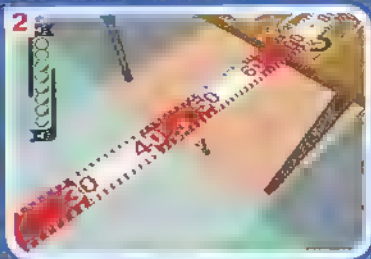
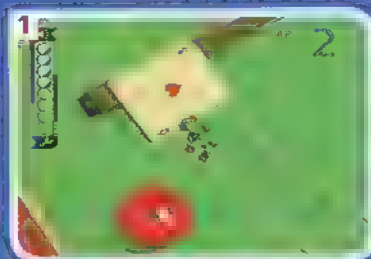


6 You'll find that when you first start playing, some of the corners seem almost impossible to take as they appear too fast. The best way to avoid flying past a corner is to note the landmark nearest to it so that you know when to turn.

7 The boats can be extremely difficult to get used to as they slide out on corners. Make sure that you use the brakes early and only tap the D-pad to turn as hitting it too hard will make you spin back on yourself.

8 The cards on the pool tables are used for two different things. The first is to allow you to get up on to the outer edge of the table and the second is a jump to another table. Make sure you know what each one does, as you have to slow down for the cards that take you on to the outer edge, so don't mistake them for jumps.





5

6

7



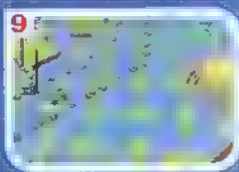
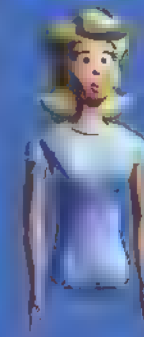
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month of June has to offer



Rage Racer



PUBLISHER: SCEE
STYLE: Racing game
PROGRAM: Playable demo

Rage Racer is one of the year's most eagerly awaited releases. It's the third of Namco's arcade road racers — *Ridge Racer* and *Ridge Racer Revolution* being the opening gambits — and a wonderful driving experience. Indeed, head to page 96 for the blowdown of the complete game. *Rage* differs from the first two in the series in that it's structured so as to ensure the driver must constantly improve and win races to earn prize money to upgrade his car. Also, your opponents are wont to swerve across the road and block your path.

You take control of the first car, the Gnade Esperanza, in the Class Three circuit called the Mythical Coast. The pressure's on because it's the last lap and you're in twelfth spot — last, if we're to speak plain. But once you get to grips with the car you'll find yourself flying past the back markers. The controls are incredibly simple — bash the 'X' button to accelerate and 'Square' to brake. Unlike the previous games, *Rage*'s circuits are far more undulating so you'll find yourself slowing dramatically on the climbs. This is why you need to earn cash to purchase new motors, or to tune up your existing car.

This is certainly one of the best demos we've ever featured.

Controls

↑ Not used
↓ Not used
← Turn left
→ Turn right
Not used
Pause
Not used
Brake
Not used
Accelerate
Not used
Not used
Not used
Not used

Additional features

The complete game is a real challenge, even for those experienced PlayStation racers. To make the later courses, you'll need up to 200,000 credits to buy the fastest cars to beat the best. And some of the latter cars are fantastic when they've been tuned up.

Further information

Like we said, the full four-page review starts on page 96; so put your foot down.



[1] Into the straight at the start before the road rises steeply.
[2] Creek ruins and a bend.



[1] Mediterranean buildings shrouded by the seaside. [2] Just the one tunnel. Great noise inside.
[3] Start revving your engine now. [4] Listen out for the whooshing sound of the waterfall.

Agent Armstrong

■ PUBLISHER: Virgin
 ■ STYLE: Shoot 'em up
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

Agent Armstrong is a traditional platform-cum-shoot 'em up but with some cunning 3D elements. Indeed, it's only once you've hopped around the missions that you realise just how few of these types of games there are for the PlayStation. You take on the role of... anybody...? anybody... yes, Agent Armstrong. The game is set in the year 1935 and a criminal cartel, headed by Spats Falconetti, is gradually taking over the world. As young Armstrong, you must do battle through a host of missions (including the now ubiquitous underwater level), blasting the enemy to save the Earth. Coders King of the Jungle have firmly placed the emphasis on playability and the action comes thick and fast. You get to tackle two whole missions in the Chicago docks area which is awash with enemy soldiers. You can cycle through different weapons - indeed, you'll need your grenades to smash past packing crates which block the way forward. You can also check out a rolling demo which shows three other environments, the industrial, jungle and

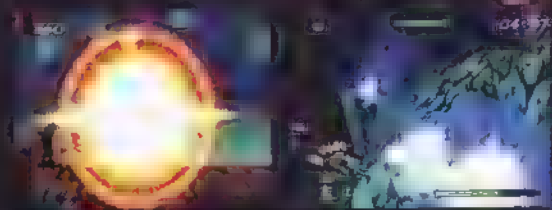
airfield areas. Use the up and down keys on the D-pad to read through the mission objectives. To run, double click and hold the D-pad in any direction. Collect all the power-ups AND LEARN TO DUCK. If you fall in the water, your gun won't function as it should for a few seconds - wait until it unclogs itself. Oh, and when throwing grenades, the longer you hold down the button, the further it will go. Save the world.

■ Controls
 ↑ Up
 ↓ Down
 ← Left
 → Right
 [] Not used
 [] Pause
 [] Jump
 [] Shoot
 [] Grenade
 [] Lie down
 [] Cycle weapon
 [] Cycle weapon

[] Not used
 [] Not used

■ Additional features
 There are some 30 missions to play in all, with a variety of differing graphical styles. And just to add spice, there are huge end-of-level bosses including a gyrocopter and a tank. Puzzles must be solved but in the main, the emphasis is on arcade action.

■ Further information
 We previewed Agent Armstrong in the Roy Race Issue (PSM20) and we'll have the review next month.



[1] A blinding, flashing end to Agent Armstrong as he explodes. [2] Also included is a rolling demo which shows off some of the other levels in the game.

Speedster

■ PUBLISHER: Paygame
 ■ STYLE: Racing game
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

Speedster is one of the PlayStation's more curious racing games. Indeed, we found it refreshingly so, if rather lacking in real pace. But you can judge for yourselves - agree to disagree, as it were. The developers, Clockwork Games, have furnished you with a splendid demonstration of the game which includes options for both one and two players. There are two cars, the Jeepster and the Silver Bullet (which

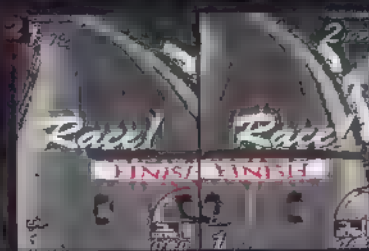
looks curiously like a Porsche 911) and you can race in Novice, Intermediate and Professional levels. You can also change the screen for hi-res and widescreen options. The demo circuit is the Atlantic course which twists and turns and you'll need a few attempts before you're comfortable with the handling. You can also use the shoulder buttons to zoom in and out of the screen.

■ Controls
 ↑ Not used
 ↓ Not used

← Turn left
 → Turn right
 [] Not used
 [] Pause
 [] Not used
 [] Brake
 [] Not used
 [] Accelerate
 [] Not used
 [] Zoom out
 [] Not used
 [] Zoom in



[1] This is the Silver Bullet, the Porsche lookalike. [2] The action is viewed from high above.



[1] Speedster combines both high-performance cars and heavy-duty vehicles. [2] It's a great demo because there's an option to play a two-player game.

■ Additional features
 Speedster features eight cars from two different classes and eight tracks. You can race them either singly or fight in Championship mode.

■ Further information
 We scored the game an average five in PSM20, so it's your chance to take issue with us.

Little Big Adventure

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
STYLE: Adventure game
PROGRAM: Playable demo

Ittle Big Adventure is the long-awaited conversion of the French PC game which caused such a storm when it was released about two years ago. This is the tale of Twinsen, an inhabitant of the repressed planet Twinsun. In his quest to depose the evil overlord, FunFrock (no, really), Twinsen embarks on an epic adventure, which takes him across the planet to seek out the fate of his race, the planet and himself. Gosh.

This demo plunks you right at the start of the game, where Twinsen has to unincarcerate himself. Er, escape, basically. Your task is to beat up the guards, collect keys, disguise yourself and move out into the street. Of course, things aren't much better here, since there are guards all over the place who shoot at you in a most relentless fashion. If only you could hide in a truck. You have to change your mood for different situations – for instance, if you want to beat someone up, press R2 for aggression and smack 'em. It'll take a bit of time getting used to the controls, but persevere. The level isn't huge but it'll take some time to suss out.

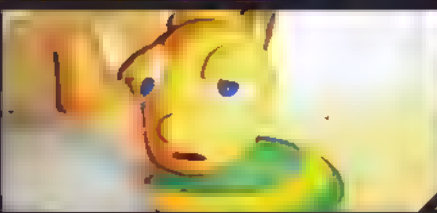
Hints List
 Look out for folk setting off alarms. You can save the game to RAM at any time using Quicksave. Collect the keys, energy and anything else you can get your hands on. The action button (square) will change according to whether you're using Aggressive, Athletic, Discreet or Normal.

Twinsun is a relatively new planet on the outskirts of a remote galaxy. Its rotational plane was stabilised between two funs.

There is a huge mountain range running along its equator, that divides the planet in half. Each hemisphere is warmed by a single sun.

The Northern hemisphere, with its orange sky, is warmer than the Southern hemisphere. Except for a

polar region, the planet's climate is clement. The formation of life forms on the planet was thus foreseeable. Four species developed over the course of the centuries: The Snerros, the Rabbibunnies, the Quetches and the Grobos. They all lived in harmony until a tyrant named Dr. FunFrock reared his ugly head.



mood, which you change using the shoulder buttons.

- Controls**
- ↑ Move up
- ↓ Move down
- ← Move left
- Move right
- Inventory
- Pause/options
- Centres you in the screen
- Action button
- Options (when you've got them)
- Normal
- Athletic
- Discreet
- Aggressive

Additional features

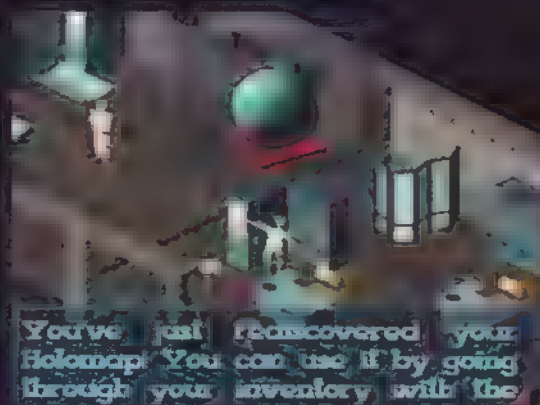
The full version of Little Big Adventure is a sprawling title, promising hundreds of locations and some 50-plus hours of



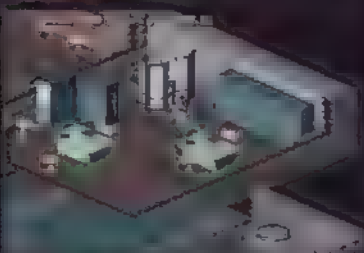
The introduction pretty much tells you what the game is all about. The rendered shot shows you getting smacked for failing in your mission. Save the game continually.

gameplay. When reviewed back in issue 119, we thought it a little sluggish and the controls a tad clumsy, so this is your big chance to see for yourself. And agree, naturally.

Further information
 The game was reviewed in PSM19 and scored six, mainly because of the fiddly controls.



You've just rediscovered your Holonap! You can use it by going through your inventory with the



You're being held here because you are a troublemaker. As a reward, I'll let you claim the



You have to make your way from an enclosed room and sneak past the alarms, knock out the guards, the steal a white coat, then take a ride on a truck. Just a hint...

ISS Pro



Riot



Jonah Lomu Rugby



It's the game we've had more questions about than any other: 'Is ISS Pro really any good?'. Well now you can tell for yourself with a fully-playable demo of the best PlayStation footie game ever. Plus two more very different sporting treats, *Jonah Lomu Rugby* and *Riot*. And a surprise or two!



Next Month

They're back!

We take an in-depth look at the latest adventures of Crash and Lara



Made in America



PSM consider the latest PlayStation games to come out of the States and we go to E3, in Atlanta, the biggest PlayStation event of the year.

Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting
The complete history of the beat 'em up

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Castlevania
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Terry Pratchett, creator of the wholly successful *Discworld* series of books and the chap behind the *Psynosis/Teeny Weeny* adventure game, talks to PSM about his love of games

T E R R Y P R A T C H E T T



What games do you particularly enjoy?

Well I finished *Duke Nukem Plutonium Pack* and *The Darkening* on the PC and I'll have to hit the shops again. Usually I prefer high-class space stuff like *Wing Commander*, or classic kill, pick-up, ammo/first aid/door-key, find-hidden-panel games, like a whole slew of things ever since *Wolfenstein*. But I was really impressed with *Tomb Raider*. Gobsnacked, in fact. It felt real. It was nearly brown trousers time in the Lost Valley, I can tell you...

You play games a lot, then?

I play computer games a lot, and I MEAN a lot. I spend a lot of time sitting writing in front of a screen, and sometimes you can do with 20 minutes relaxation. One of the nice things about making lots of money from books is that I can go into a Virgin store and actually buy whatever I want and have two men help me out to my car, carrying my bags! I'm quite used to the games scene.

So Teeny Weeny really didn't need to insist that you get up to speed on games before you became involved with the games scene?

You ask me that? Me, who played *Mazogs* on the ZX81 back in Queen Victoria's time?

Okay, well you play a lot of games and then you write the storyline for a couple of them - where will it end? Can you see yourself coming up with a whole new set of characters especially designed for computers?

I think I'd find it restricting. There's so much that you can't get into a game - the narrator's voice, the way people think, and so on. I think I'd end up banging my head against the screen. But I did have an idea about a wizard who has to run around blasting things with a pistol, until he finds a shotgun, and then he gets a chain cannon and a

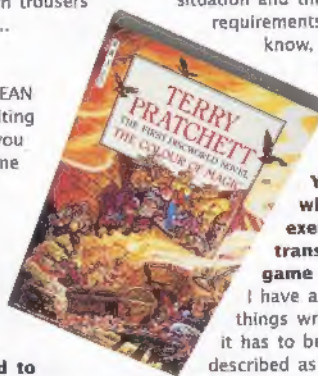
rocket launcher and has to find the key that gets him into the next chapter... Might be able to turn that into a game...

What do you think about game design generally, then?

I don't think you can get the same kind of depth in a game that you can get in a book. Even a film derived from a book doesn't have the same depth. If the game picks up something of the 'atmosphere' of the book, then it has succeeded. The *Discworld* games are an amalgam of the *Discworld* books, and the script is different from the books so we have

'I prefer high-class space stuff like Wing Commander, or classic kill, pick-up, ammo/first aid/door-key, find-hidden-panel games, like a whole slew of things ever since Wolfenstein'

injected a different kind of humour pertaining to the situation and things that are done. I have certain requirements in terms of the game. As you know, there are some famous people doing voiceovers and I want a certain character to have an Arnie Schwarzenegger voice. And the dwarves should be Welsh.



You sound like you know exactly what you want. Do you try to exercise any control over the transfer of your books into the game format?

I have a rule... I mustn't be able to prove things wrong - which isn't the same as saying it has to be exactly what I think. If someone is described as being 6ft tall in the books, then having them on screen as 4ft is wrong. Otherwise a million 14 year olds are going to write smug letters saying 'You got that wrong...'. Things like how the Patrician reacts must all be accurately portrayed. It's all quite minor, but it's important.

And are the Discworld characters based on real people? How do you come up with them?

Well, if my neighbour was a 7ft skeleton, I'd make a few notes. I base some of them on real characters but there's a limit to how many orang-utans I've met on a social basis. The witches are based on observation - my grandmother, old ladies... I make character observations all the time.

There are rumours that Discworld may transfer from game to film. Are they true?

About once a month we get a film offer. I have been

disparaging about people in the games industry. I can tell you, they're like the Angel Gabriel compared to the film people. Some of their [Hollywood's] requests are strange. They'd come and say, 'Great, fabulous, super! Like the ideas but could we change something?' - and it turns out the 'something' is the essence of the book! They didn't like Death in a game. The guys in Hollywood don't understand anything at all.

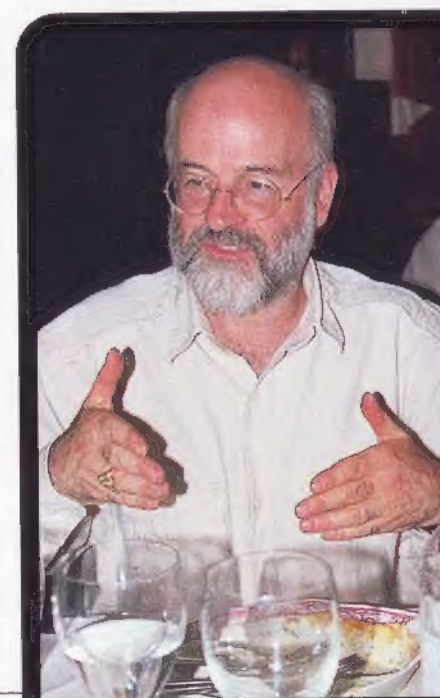
Weird one, this, but if you had a choice, which character from Discworld would you be?

The Librarian had an ability to scratch himself in reference section and anywhere else he wanted!

Finally, you're normally a very funny man - us an anecdote before you go.

On the internet there's a kind of Terry Pratchett club. A month ago we got on to the subject of anoraks and an American just didn't know what were (to anyone out there, an anorak is a green with fur on the collar). This guy thought it was an ancient Egyptian symbol called an Ankh. So I came to a craftshop and got a small Ankh figure and dressed him in an anorak, with a fur collar. They're now much sought-after symbol - it's the first piece of internet jewellery.

Thank you.



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